



A HISTORY
OF SCOTLAND
FOR THE YOUNG

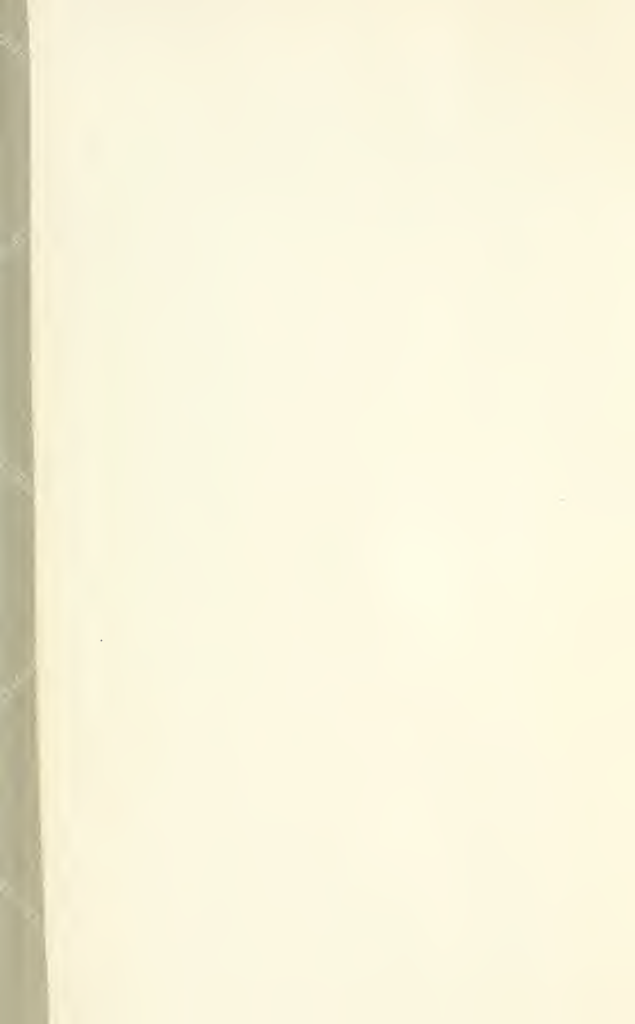
BY   
MRS. OLIPHANT . .



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Mary Queen of Scots.

from the picture in the possession of the Earl of Hertford.

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HISTORY OF SCOTLAND
FOR THE YOUNG

BY
MRS OLIPHANT

M. F. MANSFIELD
NEW YORK

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AUGUST 1900

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TO MY CHILD'S CHILD
MARGARET VALENTINE
(ALBEIT SHE HAS AS YET NO LETTERS)
THIS LITTLE BOOK IS INSCRIBED :
TO REMIND HER OF MANY SCOTS MARGARETS
WHO HAVE LIVED BEFORE HER
AND OF HER GREAT ANCESTRESS
MARGARET
OUR NATIONAL SAINT AND QUEEN





INTRODUCTORY

I FEEL that I exposed myself to a most alarming comparison in consenting to write ‘A History of Scotland for the Young’—a comparison which I most earnestly deprecate, and implore the gentle reader, even the critic whose part it is not to be gentle but just, *not* to make. I am told, though it is scarcely my own opinion, that each generation has need of its own books, notwithstanding the existence of much better books belonging to an earlier time. Our much-beloved Sir Walter, ever gentle, ever kind, will forgive the grandmother who comes humbly after him. I trust that all who take this little book in hand will do so to.

M. O. W. O.



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A History of Scotland for the Young

CHAPTER I

MALCOLM CANMORE AND MARGARET ATHELING

1057-1093

It is not necessary to attempt to lead the young reader through all the confusion and darkness in which the beginnings of all history generally are found, and especially those of the kingdom of Scotland, which was so remote, so wild, so far away from knowledge, in the ages through which we trace the first steps of Continental progress, that it is like adventuring on the wildest of bogs to try to trace its first outset among the distinct nations of the earth. There are many bogs, or, as we call them, peat mosses, through which it is a perilous business to pick one's way, in the northern half of this island—where a deceptive greenness mantles over the soil, where every second step sinks in the quaking bog, and the high heather bushes bristle in the way, and dark rivulets of water run like the lines of a puzzle everywhere. But there is no such treacherous 'moss' beyond the Tay, in the regions of the north, as the early story of a country

which, we were all once taught to believe, defeated the very Romans, withstood the Saxons, drove off the Vikings, and has remained unconquered till this day, the most ancient of kingdoms, with a list of kings reaching up into the very dawn of history.

When I was a little past the lines of childhood, and beginning to think that I was very badly educated and should do something on my own account to redeem myself from the dreadful reproach of knowing nothing, I took out a history of Scotland from my father's book-shelves, and began to read, as I had been told that many virtuous young persons did, pursuing independent studies and taking copious notes. These notes did not, I think, escape the fire a few years after ; but it is possible they may still turn up from some corner, showing my opinion of the reigns of Eugenius and Gregorius and Donaldus, and many another doubtful monarch, which the youngest student who visits Edinburgh and is taken to Holyrood, may still see, hung along the walls of the gallery there, a series of grim heads, painted all by the same pencil, at the cost we might suppose of a Scots pound each, and very dear at that price. I will not undertake to lead you through that line which I myself once treated with so much seriousness. This is not what we call serious history now, though there were Scotsmen once who were ready to die for it. These men may have perhaps been real men, but they were savage chiefs, of whom we know scarcely so much as what language they spoke. Some of them would be Picts, and the Picts have disappeared into absolute darkness without leaving a clue by which to identify them ; and others Scots : but not what we call by that name, rather wild Kerns from

Ireland, of whose record there is nothing known but bloodshed ; anyhow, no student of Scots history will be disposed to dwell upon them now.

I will not attempt to thread that bog or even try to find a dry spot here and there, but will begin the history of Scotland, so as a child may understand and find interest in it, with one of the most beautiful pictures in all its records, in the first age in which charters were granted and dates made certain—the reign of Malcolm Canmore and Margaret, his wife.

This is not to say that a great deal had not taken place before his days. The Romans had marched half over the country and built one of their wonderful walls from sea to sea, protecting the wealthy Lowlands, which they had taken possession of, and shutting off the Highlands, which they never conquered, nor ever attempted to conquer ; partly, no doubt, because there was no wealth to tempt them, and partly because the bleak mountains, as well as the hardy warriors, made so great an effort hardly worth their while. And in the far west, in the midst of the ocean, among the little islands that lie beautiful and wild under the wonderful dazzling of the northern sun (for far north as it is, the sun blazes over that sea with a splendour that half blinds the spectator—when he does condescend to shine at all) Columba had come from Ireland and found himself a sea-bird's nest among the winds and waves, and brought the Gospel and its warmth and life, not only to the islands, but to the mainland called Caledonia, or Albania, or Albyn, or perhaps on account of those exiles, Scotia—and all its warring tribes and peoples. And among the fierce nobles of that land there had arisen a certain Macbeth, whose wild story fell, as you

all know, into the hands of Shakespeare centuries after, and is now one of the best known of all the great dramas of the world. But as poets are partisans, and no one more so than Shakespeare, perhaps Macbeth is painted blacker than there was any need.

Our Malcolm Canmore was the son of the gracious Duncan, the king whom Macbeth killed treacherously when a guest in his castle, paying for the crime as such great criminals generally do, first with the loss of all that made life worth having, and then with life itself. England at this time was much further advanced than Scotland in comfort and external well-being; it was richer, and civilisation had made greater advances than in the north. Prince Malcolm escaped from Macbeth and went to the richer kingdom, in which he had relations, to seek help against the usurper; and not only did he get this help, but his eyes and his mind were opened, as happens often to those who approach a greater centre of life than that to which they are accustomed. He learned what a court was, though the court of Edward the Confessor was more devout than brilliant; and also something of the splendour and greatness of the great mediæval chiefs, for Siward, Earl of Northumberland, who was his uncle by his mother's side, was one of the most important of the Saxon nobles. And he no doubt saw in London some visitors from over the seas, the still more showy and dazzling Norman knights, whose appearance in the Saxon court was full of meaning, though not as yet alarming to anyone. Great and wonderful must those visions of rank and riches have been to the Scottish prince, who knew nothing but the uncertain supremacy of a rude and often disputed throne.

Malcolm was received with much kindness in England, and Siward went to Scotland with him to help him to regain his father's crown. The country itself rose to welcome and help him when, with the great Thane of Fife, Macduff, at his side, and Saxon Siward with his army, he marched home to the north, so that the usurper trembled before him. Macbeth has been represented as a man of many superstitions : one who might never have entered on his career of blood at all, if it had not been for the witches, women who were feared and believed in those days, and who were said to have put the whole dreadful scheme into his head, or perhaps only fanned the flame which had been already smouldering there. He had been told by these mocking prophetesses that he was safe until Birnam Wood should march to Dunsinane, where he was lodged in his strong castle. This he understood to mean that he should be always safe, for it was certain that to Dunsinane, or anywhere else, Birnam Wood could never march. But it happened that, as the advancing army marched through the noble covert of this wood, Macduff advised the soldiers each to cut for himself a bough from the trees, that their number should not be detected : and thus as Siward's men and the loyal Scots approached, the brightness of their helmets and breastplates veiled with the green leaves, it was indeed as if Birnam Wood were marching upon the usurper's castle. He was not, however, killed then but three years later, after much fighting. I saw a great oak the other day upon the banks of the clear and shining Tay which surged round the promontory of greensward upon which it stood, and this, I was told, was the last tree of Birnam Wood. Amid

all the wonderful colours of the autumn woods, it alone stood dark against the gleam of the river and the blue of the sky.

Malcolm's accession followed, but he was not crowned till 1057—the middle of an important century. He seems to have ascended his father's throne with little further disturbance or commotion, but we know little of his doings until the time came when the hospitable court of England, which had received him so well, was itself filled with trouble and dismay. The pious King Edward the Confessor died without leaving an heir ; and closely following upon that came the great event which we call the Norman Conquest, one of the greatest changes which has ever taken place in this country ; and which in the end was no doubt very beneficial, and had a great part in forming and developing the great English nation, which wanted the impulse of new and more impetuous blood than that of the heavier Saxons, to prepare it for the career of power and influence which was before it. It very often happens in the great ways of Providence that a thing which seems a disaster becomes thus a new well-spring of life and strength ; but not less is it hard upon the immediate sufferers, who do not know what the years may produce, nor in what way the destruction of their own comfort and well-being is to the advantage of their race. Some of us nowadays can trace our ancestry back to the conquering Normans, a few to the conquered Saxons ; but it has not mattered for many hundred years which side we came from originally. We come from both sides ; we are all one, and the better for being so, now.

King Malcolm looked on at all that was taking place, news of which would reach him at long intervals, in uncertain ways, sometimes by means of some band of outraged Saxons flying from their oppressors ; sometimes even through the Normans themselves, who were not all provided for by their master, and among whom, as among all soldiers of fortune, many were not satisfied. The sympathies of the Scots king, however, were no doubt on the Saxon side, and when an easterly gale drove a little fleet of Saxon galleys up the Firth of Forth, in which was a princely family escaping from the ruin that had overcome their race, he was eager to receive them, and to return to them the kindness that had been shown to him in England. These fugitives were Edgar Atheling, nearest Saxon heir to the English crown, and his two sisters. They had been on their way to Hungary, a country then in the front of the Christian world, with a distinguished king, whose daughter was the mother of the three young Athelings. The Princess Margaret did not continue that voyage, even when the winds calmed down. She remained as Malcolm's wife, Queen of Scotland and of him, for a more true lover or devoted husband never lived. This was the first of the royal marriages which linked Scotland with her richer and stronger neighbour, and which finally joined both kingdoms in one. Opinions are divided as to its precise date whether 1068 or 1070-72

Malcolm was a much older man than his princess ; he was unlearned, 'no scholar' as the poor people say—a rude Scot who could not write his royal name—and Margaret was a young lady of much education, trained in the love of everything that was beautiful,

and accustomed to the splendour of a Continental court, as well as the lesser glory of England; but there could not have been a more perfect pair. Their home was at Dunfermline, now a busy and ugly manufacturing town on the borders of the great Firth, which was then called the Scots Sea, dividing all the northern and more ancient part of the kingdom from the Lothians, which were scarcely yet a part of Scotland proper, but changed hands from time to time as the Scots kings rose or fell in power and energy. Some remains of Malcolm's palace are still supposed to stand in a wooded dell close to the town, which still shows how beautiful might then have been, long before factories or smoky chimneys were dreamed of, the primitive woodlands and heights and hollows which the imagination of Margaret's attendants, unacquainted with mountainous countries, represented as immense cliffs. We are led to suppose that Gaelic, or some variation of that primitive tongue, must still have been generally spoken even in a region now so near the centre of civilisation as Fife; for Malcolm, it is said, favoured the use of Saxon speech, which, no doubt, quickly became the language of the court.

The primitive priests, whose earliest centre was Iona, and who were still the sole religious instructors of the realm, evidently used the Celtic tongue, since Queen Margaret is said to have held many arguments with them through her husband as interpreter. The point of difference argued between them as chiefly that of the proper day for keeping Easter, and other similar matters, which made a distinction between these Celtic priests and the orthodox Catholics who had converted England, and among whom she had

been trained. This is all the more curious that the difference in question, about Easter, had been given up by the mother community at Iona several centuries before, so that it must have been the local clergy of a humble order who still clung to it in districts where no great ecclesiastical authority existed. Margaret, as we are told by her biographer, her friend and confessor, Turgot, a monk of Durham, was very zealous on this point ; but probably the rustic curates of Fife, whom we call Culdees, without any very clear idea what we mean by the name, were obstinate, as their descendants are now, and gave the queen a great deal of trouble, whose new-fangled ways, as a stranger and English-woman, would probably be little popular in the country. The same feeling still exists, curious as it is to state it, centuries after England and Scotland have been united ; and the arguments of a Fife landowner's English wife in matters of religion would be as little acceptable to the population now, as then.

This royal pair are, however, of the greatest importance in the history of Scotland, and really begin the career of the country as a historical nation. King Malcolm was a brave and vigorous soldier, like all his fighting ancestors, and so strongly seated on his own throne that he was able to make very alarming incursions into his neighbours' territory, and to organise, on various occasions, expeditions which, if Edgar Atheling, his brother-in-law, had been of similar mettle, might have gone far towards the re-establishment of the Saxon dynasty in England. It is very strange to think of a hostile army setting out from the Lothians, and carrying fire and sword across Northumberland and Cumberland as far as York and Leeds in the heart of

England, not only burning towns and destroying life, but carrying off as slaves in miserable bands, the peasants of these districts, who were certainly of the same race as the Scots between the Tweed and Forth. The existence of these prisoner-slaves in the houses of their Scotch captors must have been a distinct feature of the time, since one of the charitable offices in which Margaret occupied herself was the succour and help of her unhappy country-folk, softening their hardships, and, when she could, setting them free.

Malcolm, however, was not only a brave general and stout opponent of England, as represented by its new Norman king, but hospitable and generous beyond measure to those who were on the losing side. You will think it doubly curious that while the Scots dragged these poor Saxons across the Tweed, along with their oxen and what treasure could be picked up on the way, there should be at the same time a continual stream of Saxons arriving at the court, whether held in Dunfermline or in Edinburgh, and received there with open arms and substantial help. In those days, as perhaps still, wherever wars or tumults arose, it was always the poor who had the worst of it. The Saxon thanes were in revolt against the Norman king, and had a natural appeal to their native-born princess and her generous husband ; but the Saxon thralls were fair game to any conqueror, and had to suffer for, as well as from, their masters, whether native or foreign.

Queen Margaret, on her side, gave a great impulse to all the arts and industries in her new country. She was accustomed to luxuries both in dwellings and churches, of which the rude Scots had no notion. She brought with her a great deal of domestic wealth,

tapestries, gold and silver vessels, embroideries, books—the latter meaning manuscripts, beautifully written and decorated with pictures, or rather miniature paintings, every page having a beautiful margin drawn in colour and gold. A certain breviary or prayer-book which she possessed, was bound by skilful workmen under King Malcolm's orders, in the richest binding, decorated with jewels; and he who could not read, out of love of what was in it and of her to whom it belonged, would kiss the book which he had so ornamented for her sake. Cannot you imagine this dear lady, the fair-haired Saxon princess, seated in her bower—which would probably be but a small chamber with a narrow window, the thick stone walls hidden by tapestries, and fresh green rushes covering the floor and rustling under the foot—showing the pictures in the book to her grim warrior who adored both them and her, and knew the meaning of the Virgin and the Child, and of the good Shepherd with the lamb on his shoulder, and of the great Sufferer who hung upon the cross. The children who will read this are already too big to have pictures shown them, and are so much better off than royal Malcolm, though he was a truly noble king and perfect knight.

You will perhaps be less interested to hear that the feudal system came into Scotland along with the Saxon fugitives and discontented Normans who took refuge with Malcolm and Margaret. I do not know that it is not too great a subject for you or for me, and you will find a very fine account of it in Sir Walter Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*. But it may be briefly explained as the system under which the entire land of a country is supposed to belong to the king, and to be

granted to his vassals in return for their services in war, and aid in money and soldiers, while he carries on the government for their benefit and that of the race. The great proprietors thus held their lands from the king under pledge of furnishing so many armed men for his service when called upon ; the smaller held from their superiors, the yeomen from their squire or laird, however small might be the number they could bring. Thus every class was linked in mutual dependence with the other, and many ties were knit between man and man, which no longer exist nowadays, but which while they existed had a great deal to be said for them. Every great property was thus a fief from the crown, supposed to be intrusted to him who held it during the king's pleasure, so that it might be taken away and granted to another on occasion. Sometimes if a vassal was rebellious it was granted to his rival, who had first to turn out the first holder—which was a wonderful way of holding the balance, and keeping the great lords in check. Rebellion made the fiefs void without further ado, if the king were strong enough—the undutiful vassal having no right but that which came to him from his superior; but very often the king was not strong enough, and in that case his so-called vassals were like so many smaller independent kings. Thus in France the dukes of Normandy, at that moment represented by William the Conqueror, though vassals of the king of France, were often more powerful than their master; and if you have ever read *Quentin Durward* you will remember the picture there of Charles the Bold of Burgundy, and what a dangerous vassal he was. King Malcolm made grants of land in this way to his Saxon and Norman visitors, making

them his liege men and supporters of whatever enterprise he might take in hand : and I have no doubt they were more serviceable to him in that way than the far less disciplined clans in the north.

There came a day, however, when Malcolm carried his arms too far into England, or at least met with such opposition there as he had not hitherto encountered. What was the cause of the battle or what the quarrel we do not know. There was indeed no cause necessary, for Scotland and England were naturally at war, and continually fighting, and a raid upon the richer country was to our king the most usual occupation in the world. He had been very successful on other occasions, and had won the Lothians from the English sway ; but on this occasion he was not to be successful. He had marched upon Alnwick, not then the great place it is now, but a rude border fortress—one of those outlying lines of England which were constantly attacked. It is said that the Scots king had gone upon this expedition against the prayers and wishes of Margaret, who was ill and full of alarm for her husband and her young sons, who were with him—fears which turned out to be sadly just, though perhaps they were chiefly inspired by the fact that she was herself very ill and near death.

The army set out from Edinburgh, where, on the height of the rock, in the security of the strongest fortress in Scotland, Malcolm left his wife and their younger children. Edinburgh by this time, if not the acknowledged capital of the kingdom, was the frequent residence of the king and queen, and a much more convenient starting point for any enterprise than the region beyond the Forth. Margaret had built there

a little chapel, on the highest point of the rock, a low, small and dark building, with that clearly-marked round arch which we call Norman, and one small window, admitting, like a diamond, the dazzling beam of the daylight into the darkness of the little sanctuary. No antiquary ventures to say with confidence that the little old Norman chapel still existing on that wonderful site, with a view over half a kingdom from its small, dark doorway, is the actual chapel built by the queen ; but there is no reason why part of its walls should not have been the same, and no doubt that on that very spot, Margaret, at this melancholy moment, fainting, failing, alive only by the strength of her piety and love, went to hear mass, to receive the blessed sacrament, and to pray for her husband and her children. One day she announced to her troubled attendants that the blackest news for Scotland was on the way, and that, even while she spoke, the king had fallen. There was great excitement and great grief in the household, but yet, no doubt, some hope that the queen's fears might have made her too sad a prophet. A few days after, however, her second son, Elfred, arrived, a fugitive from the war. He was but a youth, and he tried to stammer out that all was well, when he saw his dying mother's face ; but when she commanded him to tell her the truth, his words confirmed her prophecy. The king and his eldest son had both fallen in the battle. Margaret had been holding in her hands the famous 'rood,' after which the Palace of Holyrood was afterwards named, a precious reliquary, containing, as was then believed, a portion of the true cross. She had been a happy woman all her life—a wife beloved, and a joyful mother. She raised her eyes to heaven over that

image of the cross, and gave God thanks that He had given her the cup of sorrow to drink before she died. The crown of her sorrow and privilege was, that only at her last moment was it given her to endure this greatest calamity of life. The king and queen thus died within a few days of each other in the year 1093.

Not only sorrow but rebellion was in the kingdom thus suddenly deprived at a stroke of the king and his heir. Malcolm's brother, Donaldbane, or Donald the White, by some said to have been the true heir to whom Malcolm had been preferred, by others an illegitimate brother—at all events evidently a Celtic prince, who had rallied round him the old Celtic element in the country in fierce opposition to all these new Saxons and Normans—was already thundering at the gates of Edinburgh Castle while the queen lay dying within. Her faithful servants had to carry her away on her bier, and her young children in their helplessness, under cover of a mist, down the steep western side of the castle rock, and so got them safely over the Forth to Dunfermline, where she was buried. She had founded the abbey there and the great church, where the dark and simple richness of the Norman decorations, begun at least in her day, still make the old walls beautiful, though modern folly and bad taste have done all that was possible to vulgarise the ancient house of God. Recognised as a saint by her loving country in her lifetime, she was canonised at a later period, and became, with St Andrew, one of the patron saints of Scotland. It is, no doubt, because of her that the name of Margaret has, ever since her time, been one of the most universal of female names in Scotland, little as the fact has been thought of or remembered.

Our forefathers were all desirous of putting their infants under the protection of so dear a queen and saint. It ought to be a name specially dear to the northern kingdom, since, by its pure light, Scotland itself, as a recognisable nation, with an individuality which it has never lost, first fully came forth from the mists and was made known to the outer world.

CHAPTER II

THE SAXON DYNASTY

1093-1263

THE Celtic reaction, which followed the death of Malcolm and Margaret, did not last very long, and was of no importance in history; neither, perhaps, was the reign of their eldest surviving son, Edgar, who did not live long. He was succeeded, however, by his brother, Alexander I., and then by David I., both notable and important men, in whose successive reigns the country came more and more out of the mists, assuming its due—or, indeed, considering how far off it was from the centre of Christendom, and how little wealth it possessed—more than its due importance in the world. England was larger, richer, closer to the Continent, and had lately been brought into prominence before the greater world of the time by the remarkable event of the Conquest, the invasion of Norman chivalry which had brought an island, never fully received into the ring of nations, so much nearer to the other courts and societies of the civilised world. But it is curious to see upon what equal terms the smaller, poorer, northern people, half-developed, and still mingled with so many savage elements, held its

place, constantly checking the action of its stronger neighbour, and by moments almost threatening to become, in the language of the present day, the predominant partner in that uneasy fellowship. We cannot wonder that the English kings should have left no means untried to entrap or force the Scots into the position of a subject nation, if only in the very doubtful subjection of a feudal vassal ; while the determined opposition of national sentiment on the other side is nothing less than extraordinary when we remember how much nearer the Scots of Lothian were to the Saxons of England than to the Celts of the north. It is probable, however, that in those early days it was the Norman sway, against which both were struggling, which gave the sharper edge to national feeling, and identified England to Scotland as the only power really dangerous to her liberties and existence.

The three royal brothers who thus succeeded each other on the throne of Scotland established what we may call the Saxon dynasty on the strongest foundations. Their sway over the rich country of the Lothians was now secure and permanent, and they were as often as not possessors also of Cumberland and Northumberland, the two wealthy counties which lay between England and Scotland, and were more fought over than any other part of the island. But for a considerable portion of the reigns of the sons of Malcolm peace reigned between the two kingdoms, and the kings of the Scots did a great deal for the development and cultivation of their country while thus released from more warlike cares. A great part of this work was done by their constant encouragement and endowment of the Church, which was in those days not only

the religious instructor of the nations but their secular leader as well, making deserts into ploughed fields, and promoting the patient arts of agriculture as well as those industries of a more showy kind which clustered round every ecclesiastical centre.

These last, however, were of the greatest importance to the development of the people. The churches which were built on every side—one of the first evidences of an advance in civilised life—must have of themselves done much for the neighbourhood, in which each provided work for a number of men, as well as an altogether new idea of what the house of God, and in distant consequence, the houses of men ought to be—besides higher teaching. The humble hovels and wattled sheds, which had once been good enough even for religious worship, began to be replaced on every side by cathedrals and monastic buildings of solid stone, by parish churches and chapels, where, if there was not much learning, there was at least the name of God and of the Saviour, the practical teaching of boundless charity, and the principle of aid from the strong to the weak. Religion was not religion in those days if its hands were not always open to give. It was the rule of life, just as nowadays it is our rule to refuse alms as much as possible, and to teach the poor to maintain their independence. But that was a refinement unknown in primitive days; and a country ravaged by perpetual wars and tumults would have been still more badly off if it had not been for the dole of food from the monasteries and the constant supervision of the Church, which even when it took fees from the peasant, at which he grumbled, gave back in constant expenditure of charity much of what it acquired. On

the other hand, the introduction of stranger lords, immigrants from England, to whom Scots fiefs were granted, to the indignation, no doubt, of the native Scots, were also probably of as much advantage to the country as the Scots estates were to themselves. There is one instance of this, quoted by Mr Hill Burton in his history of Scotland, which shows the process very clearly. King Edgar bestowed upon a man called Thor, an Englishman, an estate upon the banks of the River Eden, which was *desertam*—a land uncultivated and wild. It was in the Merse, in Berwickshire, and therefore full in the way of those continual excursions into or out of Northumberland of which we hear so much, and which would hinder the cultivation or improvement by any humble squatters on the soil, even of the richest country, which was the character of the Merse, now a wealthy district, long ignorant of what is meant by the word *desert*. The new proprietor built a church ‘from the foundations,’ and a busy scene of labour and activity must thus have arisen all at once in the wilds, stirring the scattered natives from their lairs, and teaching them what work and wages meant, as well as how to quarry stone and raise the walls, and, after a while, to their wonder, how to carve and decorate those stones and make them fit for the house of God. When the church was built it was endowed with ‘a ploughgate of land’ to maintain the services. Nowadays a number of people are of opinion that this ploughgate of land which Thor reclaimed from the desert and bestowed on the Church was an injustice to the people who scarcely existed in those days, but to whom an honest life was made possible by the little

centre of work, of charity and of instruction thus established.

The two younger royal brothers, Alexander and David, are supposed to have gone rather too far in the way of church endowment, especially the last named, of whom one of his successors complained ruefully that he was 'a sore sanct for the crown,' having taken away so much of the royal property to bestow it upon ecclesiastical establishments, that the kings of Scotland after him were left poorer than became their dignity. Yet, perhaps, David was wise in his generation, for if any land was safe in those days from the hands of warring lords, it was the church lands which they were bound to respect, lest worse things should befall themselves, and which afforded a sort of refuge, though not always a very secure one, for the weak and the miserable.

One of the daughters of Malcolm and Margaret married Henry I. of England, and her daughter, called like herself Maud or Matilda, was that monarch's only heir. Now, the laws of succession were as yet very insecure in those days, and the inheritance of a woman was always uncertain. It is curious how often in the course of history it comes to pass that a strong and vigorous race of men suddenly breaks off and leaves perhaps a girl, perhaps an infant, as its only representative, with the almost certain consequence of wars and struggles desolating a country, and sometimes of the total disappearance of the house. The conqueror William had a family of stalwart sons when he seated himself on the English throne, and yet in the second generation but one woman was left as the heir of this warlike race. This is the lady known in history as the Empress Matilda, who was the grand-daughter of

Malcolm and Margaret, and niece of King David. Her claim, as you will read in the history of England, was contested by Stephen, who established himself firmly on the throne, banishing her and her son Henry: though the latter afterwards recovered his inheritance and became one of the greatest of English kings.

The wrongs of his niece, however, afforded an occasion to David of Scotland to invade England in support of Matilda's cause, and also with a view in his own person of securing permanently the sovereignty of Cumberland and Northumberland which were then in his possession. This raid turned out to be of a great deal more importance in history than any since that in which Malcolm Canmore was killed forty years before, for it ended in a very famous battle called the Battle of the Standard. David had raised a great army, but it was of a very mixed and doubtful character. It was made up of all the races—a few Normans, a number of Saxons, the steady men of Lothian and Cumbria, the shepherds of Teviot, and the wild clans who had settled in Galloway, which last formed a sort of Celtic auxiliary, like the Highlanders of after days, fanciful and somewhat disobedient, both in their flashes of reckless daring and in their sudden overthrow. This mass of fighting men, with its wild fringe of half savage followers intent on plunder, alarmed the whole north of England, and raised the country against them. They penetrated as far into England as Yorkshire, and in the distracted state of the country might have overturned the very throne of England if not arrested on their way. The men of Yorkshire rose against them with a kind of desperation. The Archbishop of York himself joined their forces, and it was probably

from him that they took the idea of carrying with them the Standard after which the battle is called, and which was a great and conspicuous erection, made, we are told, of the huge mast of a ship mounted on a waggon, from which hung the banners of St Peter of York, St John of Beverley, and St Wilfred of Ripon, saints in whose honour the great cathedrals of the north were dedicated. This tall erection, was crowned with a small pyx, a vessel containing the consecrated wafer which both sides regarded as the very body of our Lord.

You may imagine what a curious contrast the Scots army made to the compact bands of the English mail-clad knights, and strong spearmen and archers, who set out to meet that great but ill-ordered army. The Galloway men, who wore no armour and knew no art of war, except the wild rush of undisciplined valour, claimed the van as their right, as the equally wild Celts from the north did on a later occasion, as you shall hear—with a boast from their leader that his bare breast would press as far into the fight as any corselet. Whether he made good his brag, history does not tell us. His people spent themselves in a reckless rush upon the English spears, but, though fighting with the utmost courage, were repulsed, and broke and fled before the iron rain of the English arrows, which were always the worst danger of the Scots: and thus the whole vast army fell into confusion. In the midst of the disorder, but while victory was still uncertain, there was a cry that the King of Scots was killed; and though it is said that King David threw aside his helmet and rode about the field shouting to the broken host and showing

himself, yet the rout had by that time become universal and could not be arrested. But I cannot do better than tell the story of this battle in the words of Sir Walter Scott, who knew better than anyone else how to describe such a scene :—

‘The armies being now near each other, the men of Galloway charged with cries which resembled the roar of a tempest. They fought for two hours with the greatest fury, and made such slaughter among the English spearmen that they began to give way. But the archers supported them and showered their arrows so thick upon the Galloway men that, having no defensive armour to resist the shock, they became dismayed and began to retreat. Prince Henry of Scotland advanced to their support with the men-at-arms. He rushed at full gallop on the part of the English line which was opposed to him and broke through it, says the historian, as if it had been a spider’s web. He then attacked the rear of the English; the men of Galloway rallied and were about to resume the contest, when an English soldier showed the head of a dead man on a spear, and called out that it was the King of Scots. The falsehood was believed by the Scottish army, who fell into confusion and fled. The king in vain threw the helmet from his head and rode barefaced among his soldiers to show that he still lived. The alarm and panic were general, and the Scots lost a battle, which, if they had won it, must have given them a great part of England, and eventually, it may be, the whole of that kingdom, distracted as it was with civil war. Such was the famous Battle of the Standard.’

This battle was fought on the 22d August 1138. There is a story told of an incident which occurred the day before, by which the name of Bruce is for the first time brought before us. He was one of the many Norman knights who held lands in both kingdoms, and was therefore a vassal of King David at the same time as of the English king. He was in the English army on this occasion, and came to King David to implore him to make peace. But he pushed his arguments too far, and was reproached by some high-tempered Scots noble with the name of traitor, on which he retired in indignation, throwing off his Scots allegiance. He was the ancestor of the famous Robert Bruce.

There are many people nowadays who believe that it is more instructive and important in the history of a country to know about a person like Thor the Englishman, of whom I have told you above, who cleared and cultivated the desert land on the banks of the Eden, and built the church and made the first centre there of dwelling and comfort, than to hear the more picturesque account of such a battle as this. But though quiet life and its arts outlast many battles, yet it must be remembered that unless there were men always ready to die for their country, and to make their bare breasts, as the Galloway chief said, its defence and rampart, quiet life and industry and comfort would have been impossible. Both are best ; but the fighting man who carries his life in his hand, and is liable to have it taken from him at any moment, must always have the most ready place in our sympathies, since no nation that is not ready to fight for its liberties, or even for its advancement, ever

stands firmly on its own footing, or gains itself the respect of the world.

The Prince Henry of Scotland mentioned above, died, as so many promising and noble princes, from whom everything was expected, have done in history, before his father, David. David himself was the best of kings, worthy to have been the son of Margaret. 'His doors were always open to suitors,' says one of the historians, 'for he had nothing secret but his counsels.' On certain days he sat at the gate of his palace to hear and to decide the causes of the poor. At dusk he dismissed all his attendants and retired to meditate on his duty to God and his people. At day-break he resumed his labours. 'I have seen him,' says Hildred, an English monk, his contemporary, 'quit his horse and dismiss his hunting equipage when any, even of the meanest, of his subjects implored an audience.' This great Battle of the Standard was the chief disaster of his reign ; but it was not followed by any loss on the part of Scotland, which shows that it was more a formal than a real defeat. He still retained Cumberland and Northumberland, though on the condition of doing homage to the King of England for them, just as the King of England in his turn did homage to the King of France for Normandy, though this led to suggestions and conclusions bitterly resented by the Scots in after times.

David was succeeded by his grandson Malcolm, called Malcolm the Maiden, who was a youth of little account and died early : and then by a second grandson, William, called the Lion, which name it is supposed he derived from the fact that it was he who first adopted as his cognisance the lion which still

‘ramps in gold’ upon the shield of Scotland. This William was the first to break the fortunate record of the Saxon dynasty. He too, like all his fathers and successors, went raiding into England on the always-standing quarrel of the rights over Northumberland—and was surprised near Alnwick, where his great-grandfather Malcolm Canmore had been killed, by a desperate body of English knights bent on throwing away their lives to stop, if possible, his advance. They had the exceeding good fortune to find William surrounded only by a handful of men, and at once assailed him. ‘Now we shall see,’ said the king with that frank instinct of chivalry which made all of the knightly order equals, ‘which of us are good knights.’ The result was that he was taken prisoner, and carried off to Northampton, where the King of England, Henry II., then was : his legs tied under his horse’s belly, it is said, which proves that the Yorkshiremen did not deserve the name of good knights. Neither did Henry II., though a great king, prove himself a good knight or honourable enemy, for he took advantage of the misfortune of his kinsman and neighbour, and declined to let him go unless he acknowledged himself to hold not only Northumberland but his kingdom itself as a fief from the English crown. How William could have consented to so dishonourable a bargain we cannot tell, but it clearly appears from it that he was no lion, but a degenerate member of his noble race. Before this disgraceful price of his freedom had been exacted from him, he had been sent a prisoner to Falaise, the seaside castle in Normandy from which the cruel brood of the conquerer had come ; and it was without any advice

but that of the few knights who had been taken along with him, and far from all succour, that the unfortunate king consented to the agreement which will always leave a stain on his name. On the other hand it must be allowed that King Henry had every justification in exacting hard terms, and that the very best thing that could possibly have happened for England was to subdue and get her foot on the neck of that uneasy neighbour who would never let her be.

William lived till 1214, and this Treaty of Falaise was made in 1174, so that he must have been a young man and unwary at the moment when he thus gave up his birthright—probably untrained save for war, and driven to despair by his imprisonment in that gloomy keep, in a strange country and with no company or counsel but that of some equally dismayed gallants of his own age. He must have come back to his kingdom a humiliated man. But it was the age of chivalry, and none could foresee the surprises which were in store. Fifteen years after, in 1189, Henry II. died, and Richard Cœur de Lion became King of England—another Lion, but a more splendid one than our humbled Scot. Richard was of William's generation, a relation and friend, besides being the greatest of the knights of his age, the embodiment of all that was chivalrous and splendid in that period. One of his first acts was to break and abolish the Treaty of Falaise, which is described as an act 'extorted' from the Scots king after his capture, and to restore all the liberties which the kingdom of Scotland had possessed before the capture, a truly knightly and kingly act, for which Cœur de Lion has at least had the one reward, though paid long after his time—of

securing to himself a minstrel and defender, worthy any monarch's while, in the person of Walter Scott, whose picture of Richard in *Ivanhoe* and the *Talisman* we are all ready to accept, and which has given him fame and character to these late generations, of which nothing can ever deprive him. The recompense came late, but it is a glorious one. Richard was just setting out on that crusade, of which you will read the most delightful and enthralling account in the book just referred to—the *Talisman*—where, if you recollect, he was accompanied by a noble Scottish knight, Sir Kenneth, who turned out in the end to be 'David, Earl of Huntington, Prince Royal of Scotland,' and whom all the girls who read history have adored since he came into being. Sir Kenneth, however, was not Prince Royal of Scotland, but only King William's brother, and actually the vassal as well as the kinsman of Richard, on account of the rich earldom of Huntington in England, which he held. He was afterwards the ancestor of Robert the Bruce, which you would say was distinction enough for any man—but of that we shall tell you in its time. King William paid a sum of ten thousand marks to King Richard for the annulling of that disgraceful treaty, which, no doubt, helped to fit out our Cœur de Lion for the war. Sir Kenneth, if you remember, probably as an effect of the same payment, had but a very poor retinue indeed. The surrender of William the Lion, thus given back by the other magnanimous Lion, his kinsman, afterwards gave occasion for that English claim of supremacy which cost so many bloody wars.

William was succeeded by his son, Alexander II., and he, in his turn, by his, Alexander III. There

was deep peace with England during these reigns, the magnanimous act of Richard having produced an agreement more complete than ever had existed before between the two nations. Both these kings married English princesses ; the first, Joan, daughter of King John ; the second, Margaret, daughter of Henry III., so that the family bond between the two royal houses was continually secured and strengthened ; indeed, it seems to have been a kind of tradition that the Scotch kings should find their wives in England, although, on the other side, there was little reciprocity, Scottish princesses for one thing being few.

During this period law and government made great progress in Scotland, and though there was much trouble in the far north with unruly clans who could scarcely yet be called, in any true sense of the word, subjects, yet the kingdom advanced steadily in internal order and well-being.

The great event of the reign was the invasion of the Norwegians, which was successfully and completely repulsed in October 1263. King Haco had raised a great fleet for this purpose, and was aided by his son-in-law the King of Man, besides having the secret support of several treacherous chiefs of the Isles. But this great fleet suffered as the great Armada did in later days, by storms and gales which seemed to fight for Scotland. Several vessels were driven ashore at Largs in Ayrshire, where they were met by a hastily raised force which utterly defeated them driving the survivors back to their ships. Haco, an old man, died when the remains of the fleet reached the Orkneys, so that all ended in misery and shame.

The repulse of the Danes brought the Hebrides and

the Isle of Man under the sway, nominally, at least, of the King of Scotland. Peace was made soon after with the Scandinavian kingdom, and, to heal all wounds, Margaret, the daughter of Alexander III. was married to Eric of Norway. All things seemed well for the dynasty. A son, younger than Margaret, was the direct heir to the crown, and the king himself was in his prime. When his wife died he married again. But the roll of the Saxon monarchs of Scotland was now filled out. Alexander's son died in childhood, and he himself, by an extraordinary and tragical accident, riding along the rocky coast at night, was suddenly killed by the stumbling of his horse. Thus in a moment the bright sky was clouded over, and trouble appeared without warning or likelihood.

The last heir of Malcolm and Margaret was now the baby daughter of the Queen of Norway, who had also died in this time of family misfortune. As in England a hundred years before, so now in Scotland the men of the race had failed, and the terrible national difficulty of a female heir had come upon the country. The trouble in Scotland was great; and there was now in England a very strong and able monarch, very keen to see every advantage for himself, and strong to make use of every opportunity that was afforded him—Edward I., great and honoured in the annals of his own country, detested in those of Scotland: on one side the wisest of kings, on the other the most ruthless of oppressors. Well might the Estates of Scotland meet in haste, and every precaution be taken to protect the rights of the little life which was all that stood between Scotland and anarchy. Edward on one side, and the little Maid of Norway

on the other—what unequal combatants ! There was a dreadful moment in which the fate of this little girl was the fate of her country, and hung in the balance. There were proposals that she should be married to Prince Edward of England, which would have been, as far as one could see, the best solution of all difficulties ; but while men exclaimed and questioned and wondered what should happen, the knot was cut in the most sudden way. Little Margaret of Norway died at Kirkwall in the stormy Orkneys, on her way to her kingdom, and Scotland was plunged into the bitter waves of a disputed succession, to struggle for her life.

CHAPTER III

THE DISPUTED SUCCESSION

THERE is something very curious and touching in the sudden stoppage, as it were, of a great family ; its sudden dwindling into the person of an infant or a woman, the trouble of the age and country in which this event occurs, and the interval, almost always of misfortune, that surrounds and separates it from the course of history, during those ages in which the power of the sword was everything. The Empress Matilda was no helpless child, but a lady of great importance in Christendom, the widow of an emperor, the wife of a powerful Continental prince, with a great part of England in her favour, and many allies and partisans ; but though the succession returned afterwards to her son in her place, her own actual share in the inheritance, which was her birthright, was of the most broken and unhappy kind. This is not because women make bad sovereigns : exactly the reverse is the case : the art of reigning is, indeed, the only one in which women have proved themselves wholly equal to the greatest men. You can all remember, I have no doubt, the great queens of history, both antique and modern, some of whom are rather more than less great than the greatest kings

among their contemporaries. It had thus nothing to do with their qualifications, but much with the necessity, in an age when physical force was the rule, of a man who could hold his own on the battlefield as well as in the council chamber, and was subject to no law of bodily weakness. The little Maid of Norway had the additional disadvantage of being a child ; and no more sad image exists in history than this of the infant queen, banished from her family and surroundings, a forlorn small exile, saved, perhaps, by the wild northern seas from a still worse shipwreck amid the storms of life.

According to all the vague signs that reach us through the mists of the ages, Scotland, at the time of this disaster, had become a country full of comfort and well-being—though poor in so far that the splendour of courts and stately houses, fine furniture, fine dress and luxury in general, were perhaps little known within her borders. The historians say that there were no great castles in this period, which is partly because they were not necessary to overawe and terrify the country as the great Norman castles did in England : but partly because the nobles were not rich enough to build them. The king lived as suited him in such strongholds as existed, but which do not remain as they must have done had they been of the solid workmanship of what is called the Norman period, like the cathedral at Dunfermline, for instance, or even the strong and solid little oratory of Margaret in the centre of the fortifications of Edinburgh Castle. Nothing so old as these in the shape of a royal house remains throughout the north. But on the other hand the country flourished, and was well off and well fed.

Everywhere in the old laws and records there appear traces of ancient towns and burghs, in which provisions were plentiful and life secure. The country, if it did not overflow with milk and honey, was rich in beeves and pasturage, and corn and oats, with 'stones out of the ground' to make good fires withal, and solid woollen stuffs to keep them warm. There were stores of 'ale and brede,' and of 'wyne and waxe,' and also of games and glee, according to the oldest of poets, in the days of Alexander the king. Roads more or less good, bridges over the greater rivers, and the existence of wheeled carriages and waggons are to be traced into the depths of this antiquity.

Nor was there any want of order in the land. The king made circuits through the country and held courts of justice where, by counsel of his lieges—perhaps the wiser men of the district, or the high nobles and churchmen, with a background of humbler spectators who would give a more or less telling assent (but probably this a mere form)—laws were passed and given forth. 'By the counsel of the good men of the town, who were leal and of good fame,' the magistrates were chosen, who saw to everything, both that the fleshers should behave themselves, who were busy in every burgher's house in the autumn, cutting up and salting the winter provision of meat—and that the town should be able to protect itself in case of danger. Such rules as that which ordained that if any man were 'destitute of the help of all men, wheresoever he might be within the kingdom, he should be under the protection of the lord king,' shows the part which the monarch had already assumed, in a country where the nobles bore often a heavy hand upon their vassals. It

must be remembered that these laws concerned chiefly the prosperous centre of the kingdom. In the wild Highlands there was little recognition of the king's law or authority. The Marmor of Ross made wars upon Alexander like an independent prince. Down to a much later period, the extreme north and the islands remained entirely insubordinate, and had to be conquered again and again by the Jameses ; but the body of Scotland, the solid centre from Berwick to Aberdeen, enjoyed a system of law and order, and of plenty and prosperity which it is wonderful to see. They were not overpowered by an alien nobility as in England, and the Church, though largely endowed, would seem to have been a gracious landlord enough to the peasants on the ecclesiastical estates. Perhaps it was in comparison with the miseries of the aftertime that the reign of this dynasty shows so well, with such a roundness and calm of well-being in the glimpses which can be made out through the fragmentary records ; but these records are too simple to have any purpose except a downright statement of fact.

The death of the little Maid of Norway, which took place in September 1290, brought these good days to an end, and plunged the country into all the evils of one of those disputed successions which so often mean civil war, with the additional disadvantage that the disputants for the crown were not native Scots, but all of them belonged to that race, not yet quite shaken down and mingled with the people they had conquered, who were still detested in England as tyrants, and only less in Scotland because they were less known, and were not there a conquering race, but held their place by the king's favour only, as his brethren in arms. The direct line

of the Scottish royal house had no heirs at all that were legitimate, and it was necessary to go back to David, Earl of Huntington, the brother of William the Lion, he, whom I have already told you of, who was Sir Kenneth in the *Talisman*. His brother, William, having been succeeded, by his son and grandson in due succession, David of Huntington had no place in his lifetime among the probable heirs of the Scots crown, and had been perhaps more of an English noble than a Scottish prince, living on his rich English estates, and marrying a great English lady, who brought him still more wealth. He was a much more wealthy person than a poor Scots king.

David's daughters, in their turn, had married in England among the great lords of the court, as was natural. The eldest of them indeed, Margaret, was the wife of the Prince of Galloway, the head of that wild people of which you have already heard ; but her daughter and heiress, Devorgilla, had married one of the great Norman nobles, John of Baliol, who had great estates both in Normandy—from one of which, Bailleul, he took his name—and in England. The second daughter, Isobel, married Robert de Bruce, the Lord of Annandale, a name which you all know well and which afterwards became the glory and pride of Scotland. The third married Comyn, Lord of Badenoch in Scotland, but a Norman like the others. There were several other sisters, but it was only Baliol and Bruce who were serious competitors for the Scottish crown.

When these claims were first mooted, Bruce (the grandfather of Robert the Bruce) was the only male descendant of Earl David, and claimed to have been

named by King Alexander III. as his heir, in case of his death childless ; but this assertion was never proved, and Alexander did not die childless, so that, even if it were true, it could be nothing but a sentimental plea in his favour. You will see that, according to our present rule of primogeniture, Baliol, being the descendant of the elder daughter, though in the second degree, had certainly the legal right over all other claimants ; but, according to the looser modes of calculation in those days, Bruce, being the immediate offspring of the Scots princess, the first man of the race, and with the presumed preference of King Alexander in his favour, had a very strong case.

Who was to decide between their claims ? The Estates of Scotland were the only authority—a body of which we know very little, how it was formed, or how held together. It seems to have assembled in every great emergency, when the great nobles and churchmen, and, on some occasions, the representatives of boroughs—probably the magistrates then existing, as we hear of no electors, nor of any central authority to choose them—met together to consult on the national affairs. When the need came for them, they were always to be found watching very anxiously, though, perhaps, with more anxiety than power, the course of events : barons and bishops and abbots—with ‘the consent of the clergy and people.’ The Estates assembled naturally in this way to arrange about the return of the little Maid of Norway, and to do all they could to have her betrothed at once to Prince Edward of England, which evidently seemed to them the best way of getting out of the difficulties of the position—which was also the opinion of the King of

England, Edward I., who was a very able king as has been said, and saw his opportunity in the troubles of the Scots. It is a little difficult to understand why the nation should have been eager for this match, seeing that its effect would have been legally and peacefully to make Scotland a part of the English kingdom. Either national feeling had not as yet been roused, or the Norman barons were strong enough in the Estates to make this conclusion not offensive, at least. Probably there was a little of both. The Estates seem, indeed, to have remained indifferent on this subject for a long time after, and it was no doubt a great immediate relief to them, having as they evidently had, no leader among them, to refer the question of the succession on the death of the little Queen to their nearest neighbour, the powerful King Edward, the greatest authority in the island. The wealthy Baliol with all his rich lands and retainers behind him ; the powerful Bruce, already Lord of Annandale, and with (perhaps) the choice of King Alexander in his favour ; —who so well as Edward could settle between them ? And never wolf was more ready to undertake the decision of any question about a sheepfold, than the English king to settle the affairs of Scotland. It was, indeed, for Edward an opportunity still more admirable than that of a marriage between his son and the heiress of Scotland ; it was nothing less than the most excellent device for annexing the northern kingdom and uniting the island in one.

To call the English king hard names because he desired this would be quite unwise. At a later period he was both cruel and false, and there is no reason for sparing him. But the desire to subdue Scotland was

perfectly natural and statesmanlike, and it is evident that at first there was no strong feeling against it among the mixed people who inhabited the centre of Scotland. Many of the nobles were Normans—the people were largely Saxon, though much mingled. Among the middle classes there must have been many whose immigration from England was comparatively recent. They seem scarcely to have been startled when Edward demanded an oath of allegiance from them, and the acknowledgement of his rights as suzerain. The English lawyers had always been most ready to prove by parchment that Scotland was a fief of the king's. Henry II., as we have seen, had exacted homage from William the Lion before he would release his prisoner, and, although this forced submission had been given back by Henry's generous successor, and the Scots had steadfastly refused to be bound by it, yet to rush the matter to a sudden conclusion, when they were in great trouble and perplexity, was against no law or precedent, besides being a great advantage to England, and perhaps, in the long run, to Scotland too. Baliol and Bruce, being both English subjects, were ready to take any number of oaths of fealty; they were already King Edward's men for their English and Norman estates. Why should they hesitate for Scotland? Neither do the Scots Estates seem to have made any resistance. They took the oath, perhaps reluctantly; but they were helpless, and it was clear there was no man among them able to take the lead.

Things thus going reluctantly, yet with comparative smoothness, for the completion of Edward's plans, he named John Baliol, an unimportant and weak man, 'of no account,' as we say, King of Scotland. Baliol was

crowned at Scone, which was the traditional scene of the coronation of the kings of the Scots, as the great Cathedral of Rheims used to be of the kings of France, on the 30th November, St Andrew's Day, 1292 : and a deceitful but short-lived calm ensued. This was broken, not by any movement of rebellion on the part of the nation, but by a very mean and paltry event, such as often brings about a great catastrophe. A couple of burgher families in the town of Berwick, then one of the largest and most flourishing towns in Scotland, had a lawsuit on the subject of a trifling sum of money, a matter of not the smallest importance either to the public or to any national interest. The loser in this suit, however, prompted no doubt by some sharp notary of the time, appealed to the English law courts against the decision of the Scots. This was a right implied in the supremacy of the King of England, but was precisely one of those details not thought of when a greater question is in hand, which sting more keenly than any formal principle. That the law courts of Scotland should no longer be supreme in Scotland was an alarming discovery to the people, and roused a new feeling among them.

Another case arose of more importance, involving great landed property, in which the Scots Estates gave judgment against one of the branches of the ancient house of Macduff, which, without the excuse of Norman blood to make that expedient natural, appealed to the over lord, the suzerain, Edward. This would seem to have been more than even the puppet king, Baliol, could bear. He was summoned to answer before the English Parliament, and refused ; but afterwards he yielded and went, appearing at the bar in the guise of an

ordinary suitor, and was ordered not only to submit in this individual case, but to give up the three strongest castles in Scotland as a penalty for his resistance. No doubt the intention of Edward, as afterwards shown, was to throw off the pretence of royalty altogether, as far as Baliol was concerned, and as soon as possible to treat Scotland as a part of his greater kingdom.

What might have happened had he been left free to carry out his plans, it is impossible to predict ; but with what seems to be an immediate stroke of that thing which we call poetic justice, Edward was, at that moment, summoned by Philip, King of France, to appear before him, almost exactly as Edward had summoned John Baliol. Edward was the vassal of France, on account of the Duchy of Normandy and other possessions held there ; and it was in the power of the King of France to disturb all his calculations about Scotland, just as it happened, on many occasions after, to be in the power of the King of Scotland to distract the English power in the midst of proceedings against France. Both parties would seem to have made the discovery of this possibility at the same moment ; and the spirit of Scotland, so overborne and broken down, was suddenly raised by the proposal from France of a treaty against the common enemy, the first of many—and the beginning of that long enduring alliance, which still, when it has come to be a recollection and a sentiment only, is often referred to as forming a traditionary bond.

This revival of courage had, however, at first no great result. Raids over the borders, which were always an easy way of showing enmity to England, only exasperated the stronger power, without doing

any good to the Scottish cause. The trembling Baliol was no leader to put method or force into any people, and when Edward, temporarily freed from other embarrassments, set out to reduce Scotland with an army far superior to any that could be brought against him, his march was one of triumph and slaughter. Berwick, which had been the first to appeal to foreign authority, was the first to suffer, and was destroyed with an inexorable hand. It had been a great seaport and flourishing commercial centre—one of the greatest in Scotland; ever since, it has been an insignificant country town, as it is now. Edward swept over the country, penetrating as far north as Elgin. He carried off everything that was most precious to the Scots, among other things the Black Stone of Scone upon which all the kings of Scotland had been enthroned, and which was said, and firmly believed, to be the stone which Jacob took for his pillow in the desert. It is now placed under the seat of that chair in Westminster which is called Edward the Confessor's chair—the coronation chair of the British monarchy. Another of his spoils was the Holy Rood, which Queen Margaret, you may remember, sent for when she was dying, and held to her breast when she heard the fatal news of her husband's and her son's death—which was called the Black Rood, though I do not know why, for it was of gold, a reliquary containing a fragment of the true cross. Edward also took possession of a thing of much less importance—the feeble king, John Baliol—whom he at once deposed and shipped off to France, where, it is said, the poor gentleman lived happy ever after upon his own lands of Bailleul, a dutiful vassal and wealthy proprietor,

which was much better for him than being king of Scotland. This took place in 1296. His reign, if reign it can be called—rather an interregnum of confusion and trouble in Scotland—lasted nearly four years. And after these facts, Edward returned home, leaving, as appeared, the country completely subdued, ready for the last act in the drama, which might have been its peaceful incorporation into England, under one sole authority and code of laws.

CHAPTER IV

WILLIAM WALLACE AND ROBERT THE BRUCE

IN this, however, the wise and skilful Edward reckoned without two highly important things. In the first place, there was Scotland to be taken into account, not much thought of hitherto between the Norman gentry, who were at the head of affairs on both sides ; and, on the other, a thing still more difficult to reckon with, and never to be calculated upon, the existence, as yet unknown, of two men—one a simple knight of Ellerslee, in Renfrewshire, William Wallace, the other, the young Lord of Carrick, Robert Bruce. The first of these had never been heard of till the year after John Baliol, a good riddance, had been deported into France, and was so done with, so far as Scotland was concerned. Nothing is known of Wallace, his family or antecedents. He is one of those popular heroes, like the King of Jerusalem in the time of Abraham, without father, without mother, who is suddenly revealed from the bosom of a people to be its deliverer. His historian, who was the wandering minstrel called Blind Harry, a sort of Scottish Homer of a humble kind, lived two hundred years later, and told the tale, as Homer did his, from tradition and the ballads and songs handed down from one generation to another. These primi-

tive sources of information represent the hero as of gigantic size and strength, but do not tell us how he came, in that confused moment of submission and resistance, and sullen discontent and conscious weakness which filled Scotland, to be the first of modern Scots, the earliest patriot leader of a country which had not till then developed a national character from among the mingled races which occupied it. 'Norman and Saxon and Dane are we,' Lord Tennyson made us all sing when the Princess of Wales first came to England; but this had been much more really true in the thirteenth century, when the very definite personage, ever since known as a Scotsman, suddenly came out from among them all, and stood revealed to the world in the valiant form of that Westland knight and man of noble genius—so far as we know, the first and last of his race.

Wallace, according to tradition, was stung into knowledge of his mission in the world, and the work, he had to do, by a great wrong and misfortune. The town of Lanark, one of the chief towns of his district, was one of those in which Edward had left an English garrison. It was the residence of Wallace's young wife, though he himself, already a well-known man in the neighbourhood, and not disposed to King Edward's sovereignty, did not find it to his safety to live there. He was on his way, however, to visit her one day, when a sudden brawl arose in the street, in the midst of which some foul jest was addressed to her, which Wallace resented and punished on the spot. A scuffle in the street was a thing of daily occurrence, but, in this, the angry young man would have been overcome by

numbers had not the door of his father-in-law's house opened behind him, and his retreat in this way been secured. But what followed was not common even in that age of violence; whether from accident, or because of some still darker story, which the minstrel is not slow to imply, the wife of Wallace was cruelly killed. Wallace, maddened by rage and grief, collected a few desperate followers, and fell upon the town by night, taking terrible vengeance upon Haselrig, the governor and author of the outrage. This part of the story we know from the statement of a son of one of the men of the garrison who was wounded in the fray, and lay helpless in the street, till the strong light of the burning town proved his salvation, as he was thus recognised and carried off in safety. This was the beginning of the career of Wallace. He roused not only much individual resistance, but what was of more importance—the spirit of Scotland. After him no tame acceptance of national degradation was possible; and Scotland steps forth from among the races which had jostled each other in her bosom for generations, as a distinct people, with national aims, hopes and ambitions, and a national spirit and love of independence never to be conquered more.

Nothing could be more rapid than the hero's progress. It was in May 1297 that Lanark was burned, and its garrison surprised. In September of that same year, Wallace, with, it is said, 40,000 footmen, and 180 mounted men, defeated an English army of considerably greater numbers on the banks of the Forth, near Stirling, and became almost complete master of Scotland. His tactics on this occasion were masterly, and his success complete, so that the remnants of the

great army under Surrey, which had been joined by many of the Scots knights, fled out of the country, leaving many English garrisons and strong places at the mercy of Wallace. He was named Guardian of Scotland in the end of that same year, a sort of Lord Protector, though always calling himself the general of King John Baliol, and doing everything in the king's name ; though he acted with an independence which brought upon him the jealousy of many of the natural leaders of the country, brave men, but not so good as this man, who, except by right of his genius as a general, had no claim to lead his country's forces at all.

Edward was himself absent, however, while his policy was being overturned in Scotland, and his first step on coming home was to organise a new expedition into the north, such an army as had never been seen—7000 mounted men-at-arms, as well as multitudes of foot soldiers. The heavily-armed cavalry seem the portion of the army which was of most account in these wars, which is curious : since we know from Italian history how the heavy armour took away from the efficiency of these troops, and ended by making war an almost bloodless game, the troopers being each a kind of strong fortress, which might be thrown to the ground and left to suffocate, but could scarcely be otherwise overcome. Edward hurried his march through an already ruined country, and came up with Wallace at Falkirk, not very far from the scene of his previous great victory. And here the immense superiority of numbers, and the presence of another great general, Wallace's equal or more, made themselves felt, and the power of Wallace was broken as

suddenly as it rose. He had no force to oppose to Edward's great army. He was forced to fight when unprepared, partly by energy on the other side, partly by treachery on his own. His defeat at Falkirk was as great as his success at Stirling, and led to a general panic and flight on the Scots side, as his victory had done on the other less than a year before.

From this moment Wallace disappears as suddenly as he had arisen. The historians do not know how to account for the rapid extinction of so remarkable a man. It is supposed he went to France, most probably to plead for the aid which Philip had promised ; at all events he disappeared from the field of Falkirk as suddenly as he arose in the scuffle in the streets of Lanark. He came from we scarcely know where ; he vanished we scarcely know how. The length of his great career in Scotland was not more than a year and a half, a very short time to engrave his name and his deeds, and something of his character—a man all for his country, and seeking nothing for himself—upon the very heart of that land, which he may be said to have re-created from the confusion in which it still lay. The much-divided country rose after him into what Thomas Carlyle has called a unanimous hero-nation ; at least, a people one and indivisible, with strong national loves and hatreds, and a spirit that nothing could henceforward break or dismay.

Wallace makes but one more appearance in history, which forms a terrible postscript to his career. Seven years later, he was 'found' and betrayed to his enemies in Glasgow, after long absence or seclusion. It is said that the fierce jealousies among the nobles who fought under him had made him feel that it was better after

Falkirk that he should withdraw ; but how or when he returned no one knows. It was long a matter of belief that he was betrayed by Sir John Monteith, whose name was held for ages almost in as much hatred in Scotland as that of Judas Iscariot ; but the tradition seems quite a doubtful one. However, by fair means or foul, he fell into the hands of Edward, and was by him carried to London and executed with every circumstance of barbarity—a continual reproach to King Edward's name. This cruel crime was performed on the 23d August 1305. We know nothing of all the intermediate circumstances of his story. It is quite possible that he was driven from the country by the intrigues of men who could not save that country as he could, but yet could prevent him from doing so, always a feat much less difficult to perform.

Robert Bruce was a very different man. He was the grandson of that Robert Bruce who first claimed the crown of Scotland, and who had been quite ready to swear any homage that was necessary without hesitation or remorse, for that object ; which, indeed, it was quite natural he should do, being, to begin with, the born subject of Edward, one of the ruling class which had conquered England and probably saw very little difference between the Saxon population whether on one side of the Tweed or the other. The Bruces were, I think, even ready to consent, at one stage of the proceedings, that Scotland should be broken into three parts and divided between themselves the Baliols and the Comyns, who were heirs in differing degrees of the late king. What it was that changed the mind of young Robert, the grandson, and made him a national leader it is hard to tell. His mother,

was a Scottish heiress, and he became in her right Earl of Carrick; but this does not seem enough to account for the difference, for the family of Bruce already had extensive possessions in Scotland. Perhaps it was only because he was young and enterprising and generous, and that King Edward's relentless determination to crush the Scots' pride and independence had worked a change in him, awakening no doubt a smouldering feeling, of the same kind as that which Scott describes in his 'Lord of the Isles' as moving the Highland prince, on hearing the claim of an English knight to arrest a party of wanderers as rebels to Edward :—

'It woke a spark which, long suppressed,
Had smouldered in Lord Ronald's breast.
Enough of Scottish blood, he said,
By English Edward had been shed.
Since matchless Wallace first had been
In mockery crowned with wreaths of green.'

There is a story given in the *Tales of a Grandfather*, which tells us how Bruce, after one of the battles in which he had fought on King Edward's side, sat down to table with spots of blood still on his hands, and heard some bystanders whisper, 'Look at that Scots knight! He is eating his own blood'—words which roused him to shame and remorse, and a complete change of conduct. This is, however, an unlikely story. We may with greater reason imagine that the execution of Wallace, whom he is reported to have met secretly at one period of his career, and whom Bruce was too noble and generous a man not to have admired as a great soldier, had finally turned a mind, already wavering and full

of thought, to disgust and revolt. Bruce was still at the English court when the execution of Wallace took place, and he had been asked by Edward, as one of the chief men of Scotland, to give his opinion on the new system of law and government to be set up there in the end of the year 1305. That system had scarcely been organised when it was discovered one day that Bruce had disappeared from court. He must have been regarded with alarm and doubt for some time, or the effect of his departure would not have been so great. He had started with but two followers only, in the very depths of the wintry weather, through the snow and cold, at a time when the Christmas rejoicings gave a momentary lull in the stormy course of public business. A long and a dreary journey it must have been until the little party drew bridle in their own district across the border. Scotland lay at the time as in death, bound in misery and iron, after the last tremendous campaign of Edward, who had reduced every fortress and destroyed every district in his way.

The horror of the death of Wallace would be the last piece of news in the crushed but indignant country. The English judges were sitting in Dumfries. The rural barons and knights, who had taken some small share in the recent fightings, but were either too great to be summarily dealt with, or too trifling for serious notice, hung about angry and threatening, but without a leader whom they could trust. The most eminent among them was Comyn, called the Red Comyn, the kinsman and rival of Bruce, who also had put in his claim for the crown, and had fought on the Scots side, but was evidently

no general, nor largely trusted by his countryfolk. Whether by accident or appointment, Bruce and he met in one of the Dumfries churches. It seemed as safe a place as could be chosen for a meeting so important. It was impossible that two such men could discuss any other subject than the condition of the country, and what could best be done for it. Bruce must have brought much fresh information as to Edward's purpose of bringing the whole country under the operation of English law, and it was probably from him the proposal came that they two should make common cause, one accepting the part of vassal, and the other assuming that of king, for the salvation of Scotland. Comyn probably was well aware that the least important place would be allotted, by general consent to himself, for he had already had his chance, and had not proved equal to it, having been appointed one of the Guardians of Scotland on the withdrawal of Wallace. He refused to join Bruce in any such undertaking, and even, it is said, dwelt upon his allegiance to King Edward as a reason for keeping apart from the bargain. The consultation thus grew rapidly into a quarrel, the end of which was that Bruce, in a fit of passion, drew his dagger and struck his enemy. Horrified at what he had done, he rushed out of the church, startling his waiting friends, who demanded what had happened. 'I fear I have killed Comyn,' he said, in agitation and dismay. 'Fear!' said another Nithsdale man, a border baron, to whom such feelings were little known. 'I'se mak siccar.' The story has been so often told, that it is scarcely necessary to explain that what he meant was, 'I'll make sure of that': which

he did at once, a thing which, no doubt, it was politic though cruel to do. The whole little party, however, were scared and overawed by the thought of this blow being given in a church; for that age firmly held, what I hope we still feel, that a church dedicated to God should indeed be a sanctuary from every violence, and that every man ought to be able to feel himself doubly secure under God's protection there.

This sacrilege, as it was called, was all the more alarming, because the Pope had done all he could to defend Scotland, and had declared her to be an independent kingdom—the Church of Scotland having deeply resented and withstood the attempt of the English Church to claim authority and power over her. The power of the Popes, though not very practically important, so far off, was very much greater at that period, politically, than it is now, and it was to the advantage of the unhappy northern kingdom at this moment of its fate that the head of the Church should maintain its independence, and stand up for its rights. But for that support the name and fame of Scotland, as a poor and small country at the end of the world, could never have been spread throughout Christendom as it was. We have not been at all grateful to the 'Pope of Rome' in Scotland; but no doubt he was on our side, and was of no small advantage to us at this ancient period, when, perhaps, more than at any other period of our history, we wanted help most.

This deed cut Bruce off from any possibility of ever making his peace with Edward, and decided his after-proceedings. It was a forlorn hope, indeed, to shake the great power of the English king, and with-

out disciplined troops, without allies, with nothing but his good sword and courage to cut his way to the crown. But he was at once a desperate man, and one of boundless daring, patience and valour, and he accepted his position with a bold and resolute heart.

There is no history more romantic and wonderful than the story of the Bruce, and how he at last established himself firmly on the throne of Scotland; but it would take a whole volume to tell you all the stories that gather about his name. For one thing, he seems to have secured the heart of the country at once, and its romantic devotion. Scotland has a very varied reputation in the world nowadays. By some it is thought to be the most prudent, calculating, money-seeking of nations, always looking to what is called the main chance, cold in its manners, stern and often forbidding, and very obstinate in its ideas. Perhaps there is truth in all these reproaches—but there is one thing that Scotland is certainly capable of beyond most nations, and that is romantic devotion and fidelity. We have seen it even in our own days carried to the height of hero-worship, and it has been shown again and again. The Scotland of that day, to her great honour and advantage, fell at this moment into a great passion of love and admiration for her Bruce, which seems to have gone through all ranks. He was crowned at Scone on the 27th March 1306, in the old chair of the Scots kings, from which the stone that made it sacred had been taken by Edward, as well as all other royal ornaments belonging to the crown of Scotland—so that it must have been in buff coat and soldier's cloak, instead of ermine and

velvet, that good King Robert was enthroned. But this was of little consequence, in comparison with the new spirit in which his reign was begun.

There is a pretty story, with a most tragic end, which should be told you in respect of Bruce's coronation. It was the right of the head of the family of Macduff, earls of Fife, to place the crown on the head of every new monarch. In the absence of the earl, his sister, the Countess of Buchan, made a long and hurried journey to perform this ceremony, and afterwards she shared the wanderings of Bruce's wife and her ladies—flying hither and thither as his fortunes rose and fell, now living gaily in a northern castle, now in a forest hut, always with moments of pleasure as well as of terror and flight. King Edward caught this noble lady at a period when Bruce's fortunes were at their lowest, and imprisoned her in a cage in one of the towers at Berwick, which was so placed that her punishment should be seen by the crowd outside, 'in life and after death,' the chroniclers say, adding a deeper horror still.

The devotion shown by this unfortunate countess was shared by the humble peasant women, who risked their farm steadings for the king, and gave him their sons to serve and die for him. If you have read Sir Walter Scott's 'Lord of the Isles,' you will see what he says, who was the best possible judge of King Robert; and you will, I hope, inherit the love of your forefathers for this noble king and patriot. Once, when he was hard pursued by the English forces, with a very small band of men, and no escape apparently possible but in retreat, he heard the cries of a poor woman who was ill, and who knew well what her fate

would be if left behind to fall into the hands of the enemy :—

‘And he did bid his little band
Upon the instant turn and stand,
And dare the worst the foe could do,
Rather than like a knight untrue,
Leave to pursuers merciless,
A woman in her last distress.’

The end of this beautiful story is delightful. The English, who were pressing upon him, knew that Bruce was an excellent general, and would not risk his handful of men, if he could help it, in a hopeless struggle. We know that he could not help it, being so true a gentleman and knight : but they thought he must have got unexpected reinforcements, and, accordingly, that it would not be wise on their part to deliver battle ; so they retreated in their turn, and, for once in a way, virtue was its own reward.

Unfortunately, I have not space to tell you of all the wonderful misfortunes Bruce went through before he gained full possession of his kingdom. Sometimes his very life hung on a thread, sometimes his followers were dispersed, his advantages all lost, himself a fugitive. One time, it is said, he was so discouraged that he had almost made up his mind to give up the attempt altogether, when, as he lay in a wretched bed in a hovel where he had taken refuge, thinking over all his miserable prospects, he saw a spider trying to connect her thread with a beam over his head. Six times she failed : and then that musing fancy, which consoles a man in so many troubles, recalled to King Robert’s mind the recollection that he also had lost six battles. ‘Now we shall see what will happen the seventh time,’ he said to himself. The seventh time

the spider was successful, and the king rose with a light heart, and went on his way and did likewise. He must have had the gift of a happy heart, or he could not have been taught in this way. For this cause it is highly unlucky, as you may have heard, for any one of the blood of Bruce to kill a spider. I have a much-diluted drop of that blood in my veins, and I would not kill a spider for the world !

You have all heard of the great battle of Bannockburn, which settled the question of Bruce's power and Scotland's independence. Edward, the great enemy of the Scots, had grown an old man, but he was more bent on the conquest of the country than ever. I have told you that, at the beginning, there was nothing wrong in this desire, but probably great wisdom, and a scheme that might have been best for both countries. But there was great harm in it now, when the spirit of the Scots people was roused, and so many cruel deeds had been done. It was a subject, however, on which the great Edward, in himself and in the other circumstances of his life a great monarch, and worthy of much respect, would hear no reason. He had spilt much blood, and soiled his conscience with many a stain on account of this object, and very likely that very fact and the sting of knowing that he had often behaved unmercifully and unknighly, made him still more desperately determined that it should not be in vain. Once more he raised a great army to carry ruin into Scotland, and solemnly vowed to devote his last days to avenging the sacrilegious murder of Comyn, which, as being a really wrong act, was the one which Bruce's enemies seized upon and placed constantly in the front of his offences. It had already done the

Scots king so much harm that the Pope had given up his intervention in favour of Scotland, and had excommunicated Bruce, a sentence which was then very dreadful in sound, though there were always plenty of discontented bishops and priests to make it less important in other ways.

Edward, however, though so determined, was old and ill—he who had been so full of fury, energy and force. He crept along slowly towards Scotland, making progress at such a tedious rate that it took him almost a year to get as far as the Border. And there he died on the 7th of July 1307, on the banks of the great rolling Firth of Solway, which, at some hours, is a great sea, and at others can be crossed over the wet, gleaming sands in a country cart—a fit emblem of the ebbing and flowing of human life. Edward had swept the country like a great devouring tide when he marched northwards before ; but now his ebb had come. He died in a little village on Solway sands, believing that his son would still carry out his policy, and giving orders that his bones should be carried in triumph at the head of his victorious army, till every spark of resistance was stamped out. But Edward dead was very different from Edward living ; his great followers and counsellors seem to have had no mind for such a dreadful triumph. Instead of carrying his bones into Scotland, they turned back and laid them with much pomp in holy Westminster beside his queen, Elinor, whom he had dearly loved. It was natural that his name should be hated in Scotland ; but in his own country it was loved and honoured, and has always stood among the greatest of English kings.

CHAPTER V

THE HOUSE OF BRUCE

IT is a great and melancholy mystery in human life, but one that often occurs, that a wise man should be replaced by a fool ; and this was the case in England at the crisis at which we have now arrived. The great English army was equipped and set forth again under the new king to subdue the rebellious Scots. Bruce, who was a man fit to cope with Edward I. in genius and force, found himself suddenly in front of another kind of foe, not an experienced, sagacious and able opponent, but a slight young man, without either genius or strength, more bent upon amusing himself and living luxuriously than of carrying out his father's plans. Whether Bannockburn would have been so triumphant a field for the Scots had the old Longshanks been at the head of the English forces, no one of course could tell. It was, in any case, a very great army, far beyond the strength of the Scots, and demanding on their side not only the greatest skill on the part of the general, but an extraordinary discipline, self-denial and union on the part of his forces. King Robert arranged his order of battle with the utmost care, and the English, who had every advantage on

their side, and who were much more numerous and much better equipped, and wanted for nothing, marched quite clamly into his snares. He had thought of everything, and they apparently had not contemplated misfortune at all, or believed defeat possible. And, indeed, from any ordinary calculation of likelihood it was not possible. But the Scots fought for bare life, while the English fought only for conquest, and there was no general fit to be named with Bruce on the other side.

Not even this, however, can account for the disgraceful panic into which the great English army broke up, king and nobles flying from the field like a herd of wild animals in abject overthrow and terror. I advise the young reader to read the 'Lord of the Isles' for the description of the battle, where they will read how, at its turning point, the poor camp followers, huddled on a low hill behind, were suddenly seized by an impulse to help their comrades, helpless though they were themselves, and began to descend the hill, putting up some kind of a flag over their irregular ranks : and how the half-beaten English took them for a second army advancing to crush them, and lost heart altogether. The story is full of incidents of this kind, which are all like pictures, so that we seem to see as well as hear the history. The object of the English had been to relieve Stirling Castle which was still held by an English garrison, the governor of which had bound himself to yield if not relieved before Midsummer Day. And you may imagine with what trembling interest the garrison watched from the castle the battle going on, on the sweeping level of the broad valley below, no doubt with triumphant

hopes as they saw the long lines of English spears, and the armour and the lances of the knights flashing in the sunshine ; until, as the long summer day glided by, the wonderful truth began to force itself upon them that this great force was not to be triumphant after all. That extraordinary surprise and disappointment has not, however, been insisted upon by historians as has been the wild, unreasoning movement of the camp followers on the other side ; but it must have been bitter indeed.

Bannockburn was one of the most decisive battles ever fought. The scene is very peaceful nowadays as you look over it, as the reader may probably have done, from the steep rock on which Stirling Castle stands, with that wonderful valley surrounding it and the hills standing all around in noble groups. It is so modern that there are now smoky chimneys rising into the pure Highland air on the banks of the burn where King Robert once stood. But Scotland will never forget Bannockburn. But for that decisive victory, the poor northern kingdom might have been degraded into a province, or, at least, maintained only the most wretched standing ground, fighting daily for her life. After Bannockburn she became again one of the best known of nations, holding her place both in war and diplomacy, more or less at peace at home, and honoured abroad in a manner which it is really difficult to account for, considering how far off and poor she was, and how truly absurd it was for that headstrong little nation to insist upon making two kingdoms out of one small island, not so much to brag of in point of size had it been but one. There are some things which are very unreasonable in themselves which are more dear to us in their unreasonableness, and more necessary to every-

thing that is noblest in our lives, than the highest logic and good sense. We are all ready still in Scotland, not only to stand for the independence of our country (which happily no one assails), but also for the fact that Scotland was always independent, and never for a moment bowed her head under any yoke. But, at the same time, Edward, when he began his attempt to lay hold on Scotland, was a wise man, and it was a fine plan, if only he could have carried it out.

It is curious to find that the tactics of Bruce, by which he overthrew Edward's fine army, are exactly those by which French historians, in later times, accounted for their own dreadful downfall at Crecy and Poitiers. The English, they say, intrenched themselves behind sharp-pointed posts, upon which the rush of the French chivalry was spent, and rendered useless. The English archers mowed down with their shafts the troops thus disabled, so that the enthusiastic valour of the Frenchmen, who counted on breaking down all resistance by their bold charge, was rendered almost worthless.

In the negotiations which followed with the Pope, who, having excommunicated Bruce, had temporarily taken the side of England, and in a somewhat ignorant attempt at peacemaking, had addressed Bruce as a private individual, not as king—the Parliament of Scotland, assembled in the Abbey of Arbroath in April 1320, six years after Bannockburn, addressed an appeal to his Holiness setting out their grievances, and stating the cause of the conflict and question between their neighbours and themselves. Attached as they were to King Robert who had delivered them, they therein declare that if ever he should consent to be subject to England,

they would immediately forsake him and put another in his place. For, says this serious and stout assembly,—

‘So long as there shall but one hundred of us remain alive we will never give consent to subject ourselves to the dominion of the English. For it is not glory, it is not riches, neither is it honour, but it is liberty alone that we contend and fight for, which no honest man will lose but with his life.’

‘Oh Freedom is a noble thing,
Freedom makes man to have lyking,
Freedom all solace to man gives.
He lives at ease who freely lives,
Grief, sickness, puirtith, want are all
Summed up within the name of thrall :’

says old Barbour, the historian, and almost contemporary of King Robert. These were the feelings of our ancestors in their day. It is one of the great problems of history how this state of feeling had come about after the mild indifference with which, at the death of the Maid of Norway, the Scots Estates and people regarded a very different settlement of the question. But that which men spend their lives for, and win by the blood of their nearest and dearest, becomes, by every blow struck and every drop of blood shed, more necessary and more dear.

The arms of Scotland continued successful during the whole of Bruce’s career. A band of famous knights, trained in his wars, among whom the names of James of Douglas and of Bruce’s nephew, Randolph, are the best known, had arisen during the national struggle, and these great soldiers were known throughout Christendom. One unsuccessful enterprise, an attempt to deliver Ireland from the English sway, and form it

into an independent kingdom, with Edward Bruce, brother of King Robert at its head, ended in the death of that reckless hero. But on no other occasion did Bruce and his followers learn what failure meant. Their continual raids against England, while England refused to acknowledge their independence, at last forced the English king and parliament to submit to necessity ; and, in 1328, a solemn act was passed by a parliament held at York, afterwards confirmed by the Scots Parliament in Edinburgh and the English in Northampton, and called from this the Treaty of Northampton, fully recognising the rights of Scotland, and arranging the respective duties of the two countries. This final act of justice was accomplished about a year only before the death of King Robert, whose reign was marked by much revision of laws and reorganisation of the kingdom, everything having fallen into disorder during the long and bitter struggle. Perhaps no man in the world of his time has left a more enduring memory. Scotland has always been strongly attached to the names of her heroes, and taken a pride in them and their achievements, for which she is often laughed at. But whereas the legend of the Emperor Barbarossa, for instance, is but a fairy tale of history, the names of Wallace and Bruce are still full of force and meaning for the least instructed of Scotch peasants. Their glory has never faded, and it is a glory of the noblest and most generous kind. Both of these mighty figures appear to us amid the mists of history unstained by either cruelty or treachery. Wallace served his country 'for nought,' receiving only in return for all his struggles the bloody laurel of a shameful martyrdom. Bruce, though he fulfilled a high and worthy ambition

and attained the crown he desired, used no ignoble means, and has left through all these centuries a fragrance of justice and kindness and mercy about him, to temper the record of his perpetual fightings and the fire and flame which were the commonplaces of his time. We have good reason to be proud of our two national heroes.

You have no doubt been told of the Crusades, which were one of the very special features of these middle ages, the object of which was to regain possession of the Holy Land, and deliver the scenes of our redemption, the country in which our Lord lived and accomplished His great sacrifice, from the hands of the Mohammedans who do not believe in that redemption. It is, I think, very humiliating to Christendom that the Mohammedans still possess that sacred soil : but we all bear it now quite calmly, without a thought on the subject. To Bruce, as indeed to most men of his age, it had always been a dream, one of those vague projects which please a man even when he sees no prospect of carrying them out, to take the Cross and strike a blow for the Holy Sepulchre. And he had also the personal object of showing his repentance for the sin of killing Comyn in a church (I fear if it had not been done in a church, he would not have felt it to be a sin), and of gaining absolution by leading an army to the East. But it was very unlikely that he could be spared from his kingdom in such troublous days, and he perhaps never really hoped to carry it out.

However, when King Robert was dying, this dream came back very strongly to his mind, and he charged one of his noblest brothers-in-arms, James of Douglas, to carry his heart to the Holy Land, and fulfil his

intention as his representative there. The noble Douglas accepted this commission gladly. King Robert died on the 7th June 1329, and was embalmed, and his heart placed in a silver case, which Douglas wore attached to a chain round his neck under his armour. Douglas had been very successful in his wars against the English, which had continued up to this time, but came to an end after the Treaty of Northampton, in which the King of England gave up all those claims upon Scotland which had caused so much trouble. There was, therefore, a moment of great peace in the land, and Douglas was able to start upon what everybody then considered a holy undertaking. He set out with a noble following and great enthusiasm, but was drawn aside, as so many Crusaders were, to help in other wars by the way. In his case it was a very proper interruption, for it was to help the Christian King of Spain against the Moors, who were the same race as those who held the Holy Land. The Moors were fine soldiers, and Sir James at last found himself very hardly bested in the midst of the battle. He took the casket from his neck and flung the heart of Bruce into the fight. 'Pass first, noble heart,' he said, 'as thou were wont, and Douglas will follow.' But the fortune of war was against him, and he fell, covering with his body that relic of his beloved king. One of the knights of his company, Sir Simon Lockhart of the Lee, brought home Bruce's heart and laid it under the high altar in Melrose Abbey, which is now a great and beautiful ruin, but still, I believe, holds this treasure. The body of Bruce was buried at Dunfermline, where a tower has been added to the beautiful old church in

memory of him. But it was built at a very poor period of art, and is quite unworthy of the place.

It was thought for a long time that Bruce was to leave no male heir, and his daughter, Marjory, who was married to the head of a family which held the hereditary office of Steward of Scotland, was to have yielded the succession to his nephew, Randolph, who was one of Bruce's greatest soldiers, and worthy to succeed him. But these arrangements were all brought to nothing by the birth of a son five years before the king's death. It must have been but a sad prospect for Bruce to leave his kingdom under a little monarch of five years old; but he was secure in the strength and faithfulness of Randolph, who was the child's natural guardian and regent during his minority. Alas! these schemes, so carefully arranged, came to nothing. Randolph, the great warrior, one of those 'mighty men of valour' who surround every great leader, as they surrounded King David in the old Biblical times, died in 1332, only three years after his uncle's death; and the child king, and the country, which had only just recovered from its great wars, was suddenly cast once more into a boiling cauldron of disorder and trouble.

The little king was sent to France to be brought up in safety, and the Scots again, without any certain head, without any man who could take the natural lead by right of character or genius, were left to struggle with another great Edward on the English throne. Edward III. had many thoughts in his mind about Scotland, which had been kept silent as long as King Robert was on the throne, but sprang up when his place was empty and his great influence departed.

Naturally, in the final settlement of Scotland, there had been many things which did not please that class of nobility of which you have so often been told—the Norman knights who were neither Scots nor English, except in a secondary degree, and who before the time of Bruce had held fiefs in both countries, and would have been well pleased to see them both under one sway, or to acknowledge, if need were, the King of England as the feudal superior of the whole island. These men had to choose their nationality, as we say, after the victories of Bruce, and throw in their lot with one side or the other; and the consequence was that there were many in Edward's court who still bore the names of the Scottish estates they had lost, and cast wistful looks across the border at the lands they had been obliged to abandon. The Earl of Athole, for instance, with immense claims upon Scotch territory, was one of them, and there were others who still kept titles which represented nothing, long after the lands from which they were derived had been given over to other hands. Among these there had been for some time residing at Edward's court a pretender of still more dangerous claims, Edward Baliol, the son of John, who had been for some years vassal-king of Scotland, and who had transferred his rights, such as they were, to his son. Edward Baliol naturally grouped around him all the men who had held estates in Scotland and had been deprived of them, and was kept in hand by King Edward, evidently in view of any chance that might occur in the long minority in Scotland. Young David Bruce had been from his cradle betrothed to the Princess Johanna of England, the sister of King Edward, but that was a small

matter in consideration of joining Scotland itself to the English crown. Baliol and his discontented barons were not openly upheld by the English authority at first, but they were permitted to steal away from court and form themselves into an army after the death of the Regent Randolph, when poor Scotland, thus doubly bereaved, had no general to lead her forces, and no strong head to give solidity to her resistance. The adventurers, by this means, got an apparent advantage, defeating the rabble of a disorderly army which had been hurriedly got together against them, so that, almost before the Scots were aware, Edward Baliol was declared king, and did homage to Edward of England as his vassal, and all the achievements of the Bruce seemed swept away again as if they had been a dream.

This, however, was but a temporary triumph, although, as soon as Baliol performed his act of homage, it became the duty of the English king to stand by him as his vassal, and Edward III. was not slow to answer to this call. Baliol had been crowned at Scone in September 1332, but so little was his victory over the Scots a real one that, in the spring of the next year, the English fitted out a great army, and marched into Scotland against the greatest force which could be raised by the Scots. The battle of Halidon Hill ensued, which was almost as great a victory for the English as Bannockburn, in the previous generation, was for the Scots, though we are bound to confess that the English have not shouted over it as we did about the other. It seemed, however, for the moment once more to settle the question as effectually as Bannockburn had done, leaving every condition

changed, the whole government of the country overturned, Scotland the vassal of England, and Baliol the subject king.

But notwithstanding this appearance of conquest, the settlement was quite an illusion, and Baliol took no more root in Scotland than does a flowering branch when stuck into a child's garden. He bore the nominal title of king from 1332 to 1339, seven very uneasy years. But, in the meantime, Edward of England, having had his attention withdrawn to much more important matters in France, Baliol, left to himself, could no longer hold head against the unwilling nation, and being forced to flight, took refuge in the English court, where he remained an expensive and useless hanger-on. Young David Bruce returned shortly after from France with his queen, Johanna of England, who had not been withheld from him in consequence of the war between their countries. They were a very young pair, and they seem to have returned to Scotland as if the kingdom in the meantime had been quite undisturbed, and no ghost of a false king had ever appeared. There is always hope in the coming in of a new heir, and probably the Scots believed that with a new Bruce on the throne, and the interlopers driven away over the border, all would now be well.

There is, however, a worse thing than the succession of a woman in a warlike age, and that is the succession of an unworthy man. It is not an uncommon thing in the world, and it is always disastrous. David Bruce had perhaps been spoiled for the rude and fighting life of his Scots kingdom by all the glories and gallantries of France, as happened to another still more ill-fated sovereign. He had been taken away too early to have

learned to love his native land, or to understand her position and character. He was a Frenchman more than a Scot, eager to defy England to a showy contest, and beat them like his father, which that father did not find easy, but which the son regarded like a tournament. When, after much irregular fighting, the fortunes of the two countries were again put to the touch of a pitched battle, the end was disastrous for the Scots, though they appear to have had the most important army. The Davids of Scotland seem to have been particularly unfortunate in this way. The battle of the Standard, in which David II. was so miserably beaten, was almost repeated in this battle of Neville's Cross, where, again, a holy standard, made of the square of rich stuff with which St Cuthbert covered the chalice when he said mass, was by miraculous direction held up over the English army, to which the victory was supposed to be secured by the special personal action of the saint. King David was taken prisoner, and the Black Rood of Scotland was lost in the battle. The latter was probably much the greater loss of the two, for it was never restored again, while the king, a possession of but little advantage to his country, was.

It does not, however, seem to have been suggested to David that he should ransom himself by taking that oath of allegiance to Edward which Baliol had taken so easily—so much respect, at least, was shown to his father's son: but there are traces of an arrangement by which he, being childless, gave some sort of promise to recommend one of Edward's sons, Lionel, as his own successor. The young prince was, of course, David's nephew by marriage, as near him as the young Steward of Scotland, who was his heir in blood. But whatever

promise David made, it never came to anything. Scotland had a great ransom to pay for her king, who was not very well worth the money, and she undertook to pay it, with much reluctance and delay. Several proposals, by which that heavy burden might be shaken off, were submitted to the Scots Parliament on various occasions—one of which was the much-desired homage, another the formal disposal of the kingdom after David, as has been said, to a son of Edward ; but they were both rejected with scorn by the Scots Estates. By degrees it would appear that portion at least some of the ransom was paid.

David Bruce died in an attempt to subdue the Lord of the Isles and his clansmen. He did nothing to make himself notable in history, nor even to gain him a respectful pity for his misfortunes. There are some plants which seem incapable of doing more than producing one magnificent blossom, in which the whole virtue of its sap and growth are given forth : and many families seem to have the same peculiarity. The Bruces were of no great account before the good King Robert, and, after him, ended in a nobody. It is a tragic yet not a singular fate.

CHAPTER VI

THE STEWARDS OF SCOTLAND

THE difficult and dangerous time, of which I have just told you, was full of wonderful stories of chivalry and picturesque incident, such as the boys would take great pleasure in, if there was time to tell them. War was, you know, the occupation of those times, just as manufactures and trade and industry are the occupations now. And yet there was a difference : for behind the armies and the knights, who were doing wonderful feats of valour, or invading and repulsing one another at the cost of many lives, without very much changing the course of affairs, we can see, at this distance, a sort of dim panorama of the country lying behind, all waste and ruined in the neighbourhood of the fighting, the poor people taking refuge in the hills, driving their cattle, and carrying off everything they possessed to be out of the way, so that the English might find nothing to eat for miles, but only a very tedious and troublesome desert to march through : whereas, on the other hand, wherever there was a little quiet, prosperous towns and villages were rising, and artisans were beginning to be well off and to form themselves into companies for mutual defence. Defence was all

the thought in those days, and how to be ready at any moment to stand and fight—with the enemy first, the old enemy of England, who was always on the watch, as the Scots of that day thought, to take advantage of them—but sometimes, unfortunately, with each other. I do not think, however, that the Scotch towns ever fought with each other as the great cities in Italy did, though they often took sides with the great lords of their districts when, as happened very often, they were on terms of hostility. The most unhappy part of Scotland was the border, which was always subject to the passage of an army—the Scots to attack England, or the English to attack Scotland ; but behind that much-troubled district, wherever, as I have said, there was a little quiet, the active spirit of the people was already awake, and work went on, and comfort grew, and even parliaments were held, so that law and order never failed ; and, what was more, the right of poor people to their own property was acknowledged with a justice which did not exist in countries much more populous and rich than Scotland.

A short time after King David's unfortunate reign, a body of French knights came to assist the Scots in their continual struggle with England, and much astonished were these noble peers when they found that they could not ride over a poor peasant's cornfield without being forced to pay for the damage they did, or take his horse from the plough without giving him its fair price ; so that these splendid cavaliers were actually detained in Scotland till they satisfied the claims of the poor farmers or ploughman, who, in their own rich country, dared not have said a word had everything been taken from them. This shows that,

even while the fighting was at its worst, there remained a very steady power behind, which probably took advantage of the absence of the fighting men to make laws for the good of the peaceful and poor. This was an unusual thing then, and we may take credit to our country for it. On the other hand, the Scots knights were second to none, and such men as the Douglasses, one after another of whom—descendants or relatives of our good Lord James, the friend of Bruce—stood at the head of the Scots chivalry: the Ramsays of Dalwolsey (now Dalhousie), the Stewarts and many more, were known throughout Christendom. They were the heroes, not only of many serious battles, but of some of those grim games of fighting in which the gentlemen of that time amused themselves as they do now at cricket or football. A tournament was a more splendid and important, as well as a more picturesque, business than a cricket match, however, for the players were the greatest men in the country, and there was always the risk that the bravest among them might leave his body on the field.

You may, perhaps, be told that the progress of the people behind, as it were, these dazzling knights, with their shining armour and their great swords, was of far more real importance than all the fighting; but this is a very doubtful opinion, since, but for the knights and the men-at-arms, and even the martyr country of the border, which was trampled down by the continual passage of these armed men, the burghers and the artificers would not have had any effective shelter of peace within, to permit them to grow, nor would the sagacious Scots Estates have had the quiet necessary for the formation of laws so excellent as those

which they have handed down to us : nor—which is, perhaps, the greatest of all—would the nation have kept so bold and determined a spirit. We may even believe now, as a matter of fact, that it would have done no great harm if England had achieved the conquest of Scotland in those far-away days ; but no good Scot would ever acknowledge this, and it would be hard to say what might have happened had the spirit of the nation been broken, or its determination to be independent lessened. That determination became a national passion, the strongest feeling of the race, and it has given a special mark and character to that race, and brought much strength and advantage to the country, now that the whole has been happily welded together by circumstance and Providence. Had Ireland been able to stand as stoutly for her personal freedom in those early days, her whole history might have been changed. And it would be as foolish to despise or undervalue the fighting men, or even the often fierce, often cruel lords, who made the name of Scotland feared and celebrated, so far off as the Continent, as to neglect the slow growth of a peaceful people growing behind under the shadow of their blazoned shields and shining spears.

When David Bruce died childless, the succession passed quite quietly, and without further question, to the son of his sister Marjory, the only legitimate daughter of Robert Bruce—Robert, the Steward of Scotland, as he was called—a man with already some experience both in war and government. The name of the family is believed to have been originally Alan or Fitz-alan—the one a simple Christian name, the other a surname formed from it ; so that we may

imagine the first Alan, or Alain, to have been probably a simple Norman who was the steward of the king, and to whose son, Fitz-alan, son of Alan, the appointment was continued : always growing in importance till his descendants became hereditary Grand Stewards of Scotland—very important officials, and among the highest nobility of the kingdom. When the noble title of Steward of Scotland—than which there could be no more becoming name : for what, indeed, should a king be, in the old-fashioned sense of the word, but the steward of God for his kingdom ?—was changed into the surname Stewart, we do not know, but it must have occurred in very early times. The house became the house of Stewart in history, very soon after the accession of the first High Steward—who came to the throne as Robert II., with all the promise and happy associations of that fortunate name. Remember that the fashionable spelling of the name Stuart, is French, not Scots, and was introduced when Queen Mary came from France, where the *w* is not used as among us. The Stewards of Scotland could only be Stewarts on British soil.

Robert II., and his successor after him, Robert III., were both peaceful and feeble kings—the one being much the same thing as the other in early Scotch history. During the reign of the first, occurred the battle of Otterburn, which was the result of one of the usual Scotch raids into England, but more renowned than many more serious battles : not that it occasioned great bloodshed or produced remarkable deeds of valour, but rather as a great frolic of fighting such as charmed the age. This seems a strange word to use, but it is really quite suitable to that great game of war,

which decided nothing, but was full of fine chivalric incidents, the knights taking delight in showing a splendid courtesy to each other, and admiration of their mutual prowess and courage and skill, even when they cut each other down. It is celebrated, though with some misrepresentation of the circumstances, in the old and well-known ballad of 'Chevy Chase,' which you ought to know: and it brings us once more in sight of Shakespeare, who has told us a great deal about Henry Percy, called Hotspur, the son of the Earl of Northumberland, which is, perhaps, not to be found in history. It was the Scots who gave him the name of Het or Hot-spur, from his rapid raids into Scotland. This time it was the Scots who were the raiders on English ground, and Hotspur fell into their hands as a prisoner. You will find what a fine fellow he was if you read Shakespeare's historical play 'Henry IV.': though if you ask me how it was that Shakespeare came to know him so well, living two hundred years after him, I am obliged to admit that I cannot tell you, except that Shakespeare knew everything, and all the old chronicles besides.

Robert III. of Scotland was a poor man who had a very tragical history. He was feeble of body, and also, I fear, of soul, ailing in health, and without sufficient character to get over that weakness; and he had a very clever and powerful brother also called Robert, who was created Duke of Albany (the title of duke came to Scotland first in this reign), and who probably, though not a good man, would have been a better king than his brother. But he was not a man who could content himself with the post of second, which is a very noble post, more noble often than the first

place, when held with loyalty and honour. Robert's eldest son, David, the Duke of Rothesay, was a foolish young man, thinking far more of his pleasures than of his duty, which is a thing many foolish young men do, thinking they have plenty of time to make it up afterwards. But this is almost always a fatal thing, and always the height of foolishness. Albany took advantage of his nephew's folly, perhaps even pushed him into it, in order to get the power into his own hands: and this state of affairs in the court made great trouble throughout the country. For you know the king was in those days, his own prime minister, and if he were unfit to rule, the entire government of the country suffered and went wrong, which is a thing that could not happen nowadays—at least, from that cause.

When this had gone very far—the king shutting himself up in his sick-room, the heir to the throne rioting and pleasure-making, and the next man, Albany, who could have kept things right if he would, thinking of nothing but how to secure the supreme power—it became evident to the country that something must be done. The old chronicles tell us that the Estates of the kingdom gathered in council, and decided that it was the king's fault that Scotland had fallen into such trouble, and that since 'for sickness of his person,' he could not 'travail to govern the realm' (travail, you know, being the strongest word that could be used for work—for the Estates knew that governing a kingdom was very hard labour indeed) he should be put aside, and his son, the Duke of Rothesay, made regent, or lieutenant of the kingdom, with the help of a council. This was in the year 1398. If you read the play of

‘Henry IV.,’ as I have recommended you, you will find that Prince Henry in England, and Prince David in Scotland, were both very much of the same character, or, at least, appeared so, being both madcaps, loving every kind of fun and frolic, and perhaps wickedness too; but yet, in the case of Henry, with great qualities behind. The Duke of Rothesay did not live long enough to prove whether he ever could have come to be a man like Henry V. But he showed some spirit and valour after he was made lieutenant of the kingdom, and commanded in the castle of Edinburgh when Henry IV. made a very ineffectual and bloodless raid into the kingdom: and held parley with that wise king declaring his desire to spare the spilling of Christian blood, and proposing a sort of ordeal by combat between himself and Henry, with two or three hundred chosen men on each side to decide the quarrel between England and Scotland. Perhaps this was but a foolish proposal; but it was natural to a young knight in those days, and if it had saved further bloodshed and trouble, would really have been a fine thing to do. Henry IV., however, withdrew from Scotland without any advantage at all on this occasion, which looks as if the state of Scotland had improved from the low level to which it had fallen, when the Estates had interfered and put the government into the hands of Rothesay and his council.

This, however, was apparently but a momentary success on Rothesay’s part. He did not mend his manners, and he got into trouble himself with the powerful family of Douglas, into which he had married. You will find all this in Sir Walter Scott’s novel, called *The Fair Maid of Perth*, where Marjorie of

Douglas, the poor young Duke's wife, is represented in a very unfavourable light. And I think, when you have read that and 'Henry IV.,' you will know more about this period than I can tell you, for Scott was one of the men, like Shakespeare, who knew everything. However, you must hear the sad story of David of Rothesay. Some adventure of his, not very clearly understood, gave his uncle a chance of laying hands upon him, and he was seized secretly near St Andrews in Fife, in the summer of 1402, and carried off to the castle of Falkland, in the centre of that country, where there still exists a grim old tower, into the dungeon of which, underground, Rothesay was thrown, and there, as has always been believed, starved to death. This dreadful method of murder seems to have been chosen in order that it might be said that no man had laid hands on him to kill him: and thus this unfortunate young prince died like a rat in his hole, in the midst of all his splendour and gaiety; and whether he might ever have come to be a good and a strong man like Prince Henry of England, after all his foolishness, no one can now know. King Richard II. of England had died in a similar way, as mysteriously, at least, in the castle of Pomfret, not very long before: and it is curious that Albany, who was the cause of the one crime tried to take advantage of the other by insisting that Richard was still alive, and trying to make use of an impostor under his name against Henry IV.: but this came to nothing.

Poor old King Robert, sick and sad and dispossessed of his throne, heard of the dreadful death of his prodigal son with grief and terror, not knowing what might be the fate of the other son who remained to him, James,

then a boy and unable to defend himself. With many precautions, however, the king succeeded in sending James away to France, to be brought up in the friendly court there, where he would learn all the accomplishments of the time. But he had scarcely got beyond the coast of Scotland when his ship was taken by an English ship cruising in that stormy sea, in the rough March weather of 1405, and so was carried off to King Henry, and became the prisoner of England instead of the pupil of France. This last blow broke his father's heart. King Robert died a year after, leaving Albany at the head of affairs in Scotland, Governor of the realm—which is one of the instances occurring sometimes in this world, in which the wicked seem to be rewarded and not the good. But yet it must have been gall and bitterness to the heart of Albany that, though he was governor, he could never be king. Yet he used his power well on the whole, and was a good governor, though not a good man. During his regency, a great battle took place between the Highlanders and Lowlanders, one of the most memorable events in the long struggle between them, which is known as the battle of Harlaw. As it was a war between neighbours—the worst kind of civil war, and the hatred between the two parties was unusually strong—it was much famed in the history of the time, although it produced no great result.

Very soon after Rothesay's death, there was also another great fight on the borders, in which we again find the names of Hotspur and of Douglas, as at Otterburn, and which is called the battle of Homildon; but the victory this time was with the English. It was very much of the same character as Otterburn,

and of no consequence in history, except that the conditions were reversed and that it was Douglas this time who was taken prisoner, and Hotspur who was the conqueror. Afterwards, Douglas made friends with his English captors, who had by that time risen against Henry IV., and fighting against the royal forces at Shrewsbury, which was a thing always congenial to one of his name, was taken prisoner, while Hotspur was killed. Douglas was afterwards slain in the battle of Verneuil in France, also fighting against the English; so there was an end of these two great enemies and brothers-in-arms.

CHAPTER VII

JAMES I

THE term of James Stewart's detention in England was nearly twenty years, but during this period, affairs went on sufficiently well for the greater part of the time under the regency of Albany, who was not a good man, indeed, but was a good ruler. Albany began his career by refusing to consent to a poll-tax—that is a task on every head over the whole country, which he would not hear of as being hard on the poor—a thing for which, perhaps, we ought to forgive him many of his sins : although, in fact, this is only a pretty and sentimental form of injustice—for poor men are members of a community quite as much as the rich, and to free them from a just tax is to treat them with contempt, though few of them are so enlightened as to see this. It was under Albany that the great battle of Harlaw, already mentioned, was fought, which subdued the rising power of the Celtic part of the population—the Highlanders and Islanders—who had very little sympathy with the rest of Scotland, and were continually making raids upon the low country, as the Scotch made on the English, and the English on the Scotch, in what was then considered

a perfectly natural and honourable way, seeing the two nations were always at enmity. But the people of Aberdeen and Perthshire, and other countries which lay at the foot of the mountains, did not consider it at all lawful or agreeable when the Highland caterans, as they were called, came down upon them. The Highlanders were never quite subdued; they continued through all the history of Scotland to make perpetual risings, and it was not until the middle of last century that at last they began to see that their best interests were the same as those of the rest of the country; but this I will tell you when the time comes. In the meantime, the battle of Harlaw caused great loss, and subdued the Celtic population for a long time, restoring peace to the neighbouring districts. There had been a very curious, romantic and dreadful conflict between two clans at Perth, on one of the beautiful river banks called Inches, in the reign of King Robert. The king was residing in Perth with his court, and this bloody conflict furnished a great spectacle for their amusement. Thirty men were pitted against each other on each side, and all the population and the court and the fine ladies looked on applauding to see them kill each other. You will read a wonderful description of this in *The Fair Maid of Perth*, where Sir Walter Scott has put a human interest in it beyond the mere bloodshed; but none of all the historians have been able to say what it meant.

James was only a boy when he was taken to England, fourteen years old, some historians say, while some make him only ten. He was very nobly treated in England, and brought up there with more advantages than he could have had in his own kingdom,

although there is no doubt that, in the later part of his captivity, at least, he felt, very deeply the evil fate that kept him inactive in his prime, while other men and they his enemies, administered his kingdom. Henry V., who had succeeded his father Henry IV., took James with him to France during his victorious campaigns there, by way, it is believed, of separating from the French the fine force of Scottish knights, who had placed themselves on the side of their old allies. And it must have been a bitter mortification to James to remain a spectator in such a struggle, while his own native countrymen and subjects were fighting on the other side—the battle of Verneuil, for instance, being principally fought (and lost) by the Scots, a large number of whom, and among them the great Earl Douglas, were killed there. It is pleasant, however, to know that Henry V. behaved in a very generous and noble manner to James. Some of the greatest heroes of English history have thus shown themselves magnanimous in their treatment of the Scots. Richard Coeur de Lion, you will remember, generously gave up the cruel exactions of his father: and Henry V., who was as brave a man and much more successful, proved himself a noble guardian to James, who probably, had he been in Scotland, would have been in some manner, before he became a man, put out of Albany's way.

Albany apparently made no attempt to ransom the young king, but he did succeed in ransoming his own son, Murdoch, who was also a prisoner in England, and who succeeded him when he died in 1419. But it very often happens in history, that the work of a strong man is destroyed by his successor. You know

that even the great Robert Bruce had a feeble and degenerate son; and so it happened with Albany. The second regent of that name was like his grandfather and uncle, Robert II. and Robert III., a man of small account, though, perhaps, of better nature than his father, as he does not seem at least to have resisted the growing agitation in Scotland to ransom the king. It is curious to note here the changes of character which took place in the house of Stewart at different points in their history. The two Roberts had not filled their place nobly; they had turned out weak, incapable and insignificant. The series of the Jameses, which was now about to begin, were totally different men. It is as if a new race had taken the place of the first Stewarts, a family of strong character and many splendid and attractive qualities, quite unknown to its earlier members. This section of the race, which came to a climax in Mary Stewart, sank again to the level of the old Roberts in her son James VI.: after whom, again, a change took place of the same marked character, the later Stewart kings being as unlike our chivalrous Jameses as night to day. You will perceive this as the story goes on, but I cannot resist the impulse of pointing it out to you when it first begins.

James the First of Scotland came back to his native country in 1424, and was crowned in Scone on the 21st May in that year. He was one of those men who stand out among their contemporaries, whatever may happen to have been the accident of their birth. He was not only a man of great ability and strength of character, but he was, which is still less common, a poet, one of the first of the school of Chaucer, and a very worthy follower of that great singer. The

language of Scotland in those days, though you often hear that it was unintelligible to the English, as a matter of fact differed very little from that of England. Dumfriesshire and Somersetshire would not be very comprehensible to each other, then or now; but the written tongue, with a little distinction of form and spelling, was the same. James's great poem, the 'King's Quhair,' though it is very antiquated in its spelling, and might seem difficult to a young reader, is not really difficult when you study it carefully, and perceive that the spelling is only like the old-fashioned cut of a coat, and does not alter the meaning any more than an old-fashioned garment alters the form of the body it clothes. James had been brought up in England, and his poetical language is that of Chaucer, full of melody, but also of long-drawn comparisons and prolonged and fanciful description. He paints every dewdrop on every twig till you feel the freshness of the morning in the elaborate landscape; but he has not the gift of placing the men and women of the time before us as if we had known them, as some of you may perhaps feel if you read the Prologue to Chaucer's 'Canterbury Pilgrims.'

There is one wonderful scene, however, in King James's poem which is as clear as any tale of Chaucer's. James was imprisoned in Windsor Castle, which was not the palace we now know, but consisted chiefly of a great donjon, or keep, which is now called the Round Tower—surrounded by a few other towers and fortified buildings. The Round Tower had at first been surrounded by a moat to make it strong and defensible, but, before James's time, that moat had been turned into a garden, as it still is, lying deep down at

the foot of the donjon, and the grassy bank on which the great tower is founded. Looking out of the window of the tower, which was his prison, one summer morning, James saw the loveliest young lady that had ever been seen, walking in the pleasant path all bordered with flowers, herself like a flower in her beautiful old-world dress, with fair rubies and emeralds sparkling in the sun.

The young captive prince did not know at first who this fair lady was, but he fell in love with her at once. She was Lady Jane or Joan Beaufort, the daughter of the Duke of Somerset, and a princess of the blood royal of England, first cousin to the king; and if he had sought all the world over, he could have found no one so suitable for him to marry as this beautiful girl, whom he made up his mind at once to marry if he could, whoever she might be—so that this was a most fortunate accident for the poet prince. His love for Lady Jane had probably more to do with the success of the Scottish negotiations than the ransom that was offered, for the English Court was always anxious to bind the Scots to them by marriage when that was possible. By the time of his marriage, however, King James was no boy but a full-grown and accomplished man of thirty-three or thirty-four, and the most nobly trained that had ever sat on the Scottish throne. He was not so great or commanding in himself as his ancestor, Robert Bruce, and he was not so fortunate; but his circumstances were very different, and other qualities were required in him. But it may be said that no king in Scotland had ever been so carefully trained and educated; and, during his long leisure in his prison, he must have thought

much of the duties before him, and longed, as you will see by his poem, for the moment when he could take his proper place, to govern and improve his country, which was the task to which he set himself with all his heart.

One of the first acts of his reign was to try for their lives and execute, the Duke of Albany, his cousin Murdoch, who had been regent, and his sons along with him, for what special crime history cannot tell us. Let us hope it was not merely in revenge for his poor brother Rothesay's murder and his own long exile, for these were crimes long past, and it was the elder Albany who had the chief part in them. James, however, though he was a poet and full of courtesy, and even of mercy, was yet a man of his time, and did not hesitate to cut down, root and branch, a corrupt tree. The great work of his reign, however, was to settle on a surer and clearer foundation the old laws of Scotland, which, though good and just, and in many ways, as we have seen, superior to those of more advanced countries, were very imperfect and broken, framed on no solid system, often incomplete, sometimes neglected, and very insufficiently known. In England, everything was in much greater order, as James had learned, and he was fully sensible that it would be a benefit to Scotland to follow her richer neighbour in this respect.

The revision of the laws brought with it another equally important revision, and that was a general inquiry into the titles of property and lands throughout Scotland, an inquiry how they had come into the hands of their present proprietors and who had the best right to them, with many other questions which

were very troublesome to men who had perhaps taken their neighbour's lands from him when they happened to be stronger than he, or had appropriated the estate of an orphan, or otherwise enriched themselves at other people's expense, which was a very common thing indeed; for, at that period, as in most primitive times, the chief law was the law of the strong hand, and every man secured for himself as much as he was powerful enough to take possession of, and strong enough to keep.

You may imagine how a great baron or chief felt when King James, so to speak, looked him in the face, with all his new-fangled politeness and state, as the rude Scots noble would think—and requested that he would produce his charters and title-deeds, and show how he had come by his property, and all about it. King James went back to the time when his predecessor, the Bruce, had provided for his great vassals, and Scotland had been re-settled, sometimes under new lords, sometimes in the possession of the loyal members of existing houses, setting aside a lawful but rebellious heir; at all events, with many changes from the troubled and unsettled past. The agitation must have been great in Scotland while this inquiry went on, and men who had no title at all were called on to prove what they did there.

One great example was that of the Earl of March, a great lord, one of the greatest in the kingdom, who, possessing estates both in England and Scotland, had, during the reign of the last Robert, transferred his allegiance to England, and so lost all his Scottish lands. Repenting afterwards, he had been released from his forfeiture by Albany, and got back a portion

of his Scotch property. But when the matter came before James, it was declared that Albany had no right to do away with the sentence passed on Lord March for treason, and that, therefore, he and his family had no rights in Scotland. Another great family, that of Graham, Earls of Strathearn, lost their lands, and were unseated for other reasons. No doubt, less important houses than these fell without so much observation, and this was the cause of the great tragedy which ended James's reign and life.

He occupied the throne for thirteen years, and was a just and a powerful king. It was in one of his visitations, or 'raids,' as they were called—for there were raids of law as well as of robbery—and while surveying the many charters and grants made to the Church by the first David of Scotland, that he called that king 'a sore saint for the crown,' a speech which has often been quoted. The crown of Scotland was never rich, and James would have been thankful to have some of those ecclesiastical lands back again, to keep up the credit of his court. But he did not lay violent hands upon them as many would have done. He made another attempt to subdue the Highlands and bring that difficult country under the sway of law, and this time with such success that one of the most important of its chiefs, Donald, Lord of the Isles, made a wonderful appearance in the Chapel of Holyrood one Easter day, in the year 1431. In the midst of the High Mass, when all the music was sounding, this chieftain suddenly appeared as a penitent, naked to the waist, and, kneeling down at the king's feet, offered him his sword in token of complete submission. James accepted his surrender, but kept him in prison,

and it was not long before his clan resumed their rebellious ways : for indeed it did not matter much up among the mountains, where news travelled very slowly, and every man was a fighting man, how often one clan or another was defeated or leader killed. It was the mutual order of things that they should begin again.

James did not cease to be a poet when he became a king. It was the tradition of several centuries that he was the author of two of the oldest ballads in the language, more familiar and homely than the stately verse which he had written in Windsor, and affording a very curious and jovial picture of the country manners of the time. 'Christ's Kirk on the Green' is a description of a rustic fair, or merry-making, and is not, we must allow, much like the work of a king, or of one educated in fine English as James had been : and his authorship is questioned nowadays, as so many things are. But it is a most lively and life-like picture of the country festival, when all the women got up early in the morning to get ready their finery, and the lads and lasses made the roads ring with their jests and laughter, and a wonderful background of rustic comfort and well-being, strange to believe, when we remember the unsettled state of the country and its avowed poverty, is visible behind. But we have had various other signs that, though poor in everything that regarded court life and outward show, the people of Scotland were by no means so badly off as might be supposed. They had always abundance of 'fish and flesh,' it is admitted by one of the contemporary writers, though he described the condition of the country otherwise in the most gloomy terms: and that

is always a very great element in the comfort of the poor. They certainly have every appearance of being well off and merry and gay in this old poem, which is very interesting in this point of view, whether written by King James or not.

This ballad and another called ‘Peblis to the Play,’ very similar in every point, seem to have been written with the special object of turning into ridicule the clumsy country fellows who would not learn archery, in which Englishmen at that time were so efficient. In all the battles between the English and the Scots, this arm had quite an overpowering place, some of these contests being almost entirely decided by the bowmen. Now that we have guns, the bow and arrow are no longer weapons of importance, but in those days, they took the place of fire-arms, and even the strongest armour could not resist them. James I. was exceedingly anxious to introduce this weapon into Scotland, but neither he nor his successors ever succeeded in doing so. The Scots were excellent spearmen, but, by some strange caprice, would not take to the bow, which is a very curious feature of difference between the two nations.

If this poem was written by James I., he was a merry man, and understood the pleasures of the people, as well as a very serious king, labouring hard for their advantage ; and we have every reason to believe that he was beloved by the great body of his subjects. But the men who had not been able to satisfy his courts that they had a just right to their lands, and from whom these lands were taken in consequence, hated him, as it was not unnatural they should do. He had spent the Christmas of 1436 in Perth, in the monastery of the

Blackfriars, and remained there for some time holding his courts of justice. The picture we have of his manner of life, though it comes in only as the background of the great tragedy to follow, is very attractive. He seems to have passed the holiday in happy freedom, not allowing himself to be scared by the warnings of danger, or by the threats of the Grahams who were of that district, and whom he had dispossessed. One evening while he lingered, before going to bed, with his queen and her ladies, making music and talking gaily and fearing no evil, without either sword or soldier near, the sound of tumult and angry cries suddenly arose outside. There could not long be any doubt about the nature of those cries, and the startled party ran to the doors to see that they were fastened, and that the guardians outside were at their posts: when it was discovered to the dismay of all, that there was not so much as a sentinel near, and that the very fastenings of the door had been removed. One of the young maids of honour, Katherine Douglas, thrust her poor, little soft arm into the staples, where an iron bar should have been, to gain a little time. Someone of the party remembered that there was an opening in the floor of the room to a vault beneath, which was a sort of sewer, for nobody knew anything about sanitary arrangements in those days. This trap door, or loose plank, was torn open by the king, and he got down to the safe place beneath, while the trembling ladies, no doubt, drew over it the rushes that covered the floor, or perhaps a carpet, though such luxuries were rare. They hoped, no doubt, that he was in safety, when the murderers broke in, and, enraged not to find him, rushed through the other rooms with

their torches, searching for the king. But James himself, only the day before, had caused the outlet from this vault to be built up, so that he could not escape, and his enemies, coming back, caught sight of something that betrayed his hiding-place, and burst it open. James fought for his life as well as a man unarmed could do, and it was said that some of his assassins bore the marks of his grip till their dying day. But they were many, and he fell, pierced, it is said, with sixteen stabs, in the presence of his queen, who was herself wounded while trying to defend him, and the little group of ladies, with whom a little before he had been so gay.

The head of the conspiracy which did this horrible deed was Sir Robert Graham, of the dispossessed house of Strathearn, who had been turned into a ferocious savage by the downfall of his family, and who had made himself remarked by threats against the king—of which James, unfortunately, had taken little notice. He had, indeed, received many warnings, especially from an old Highland woman, one of those who, in every country, have got credit as tellers of fortunes and prophets of the future, who waylaid him on the road to Perth as he crossed the Tay and at other places, warning him that if he proceeded on his journey, he should never come back. This ‘spæwife,’ as she is called, made a last attempt to see him on the very day of the murder. But James, a brave and fearless man, disregarded all such warnings, unfortunately, as it proved in this case. He was murdered on the 20th February 1437.

The nation rose in furious indignation and grief when the dreadful facts were known, and the mu -

derers were soon caught and punished with a ferocity equal to their own. Among them were some great men—the Earl of Athole for one, the uncle of James, and an old man. But the public fury was so great that no mercy was shown ; and a few days after, James's eldest son, a little boy of seven or eight years old, who had been left in Edinburgh Castle while his parents went to the north, was hastily crowned king, poor child ! the nobles of Scotland all crowding about him, anxious to show that they had nothing to do with the cruel vengeance and treason of the Grahams. Poor little king, put into his father's large robes and on his father's seat at such an age ! How different from the usual cares that surround a little prince ! How different from the tenderness with which the children of the poorest peasant are preserved from danger, was the terrible childhood of this infant king !

CHAPTER VIII

J A I M E S I I

THE Estates of Scotland were called together at once to appoint a Regency, and take such steps as were necessary for the government of the kingdom and safety of the king. They took the curious step of appointing two men to be joint-Regents, with the intention, probably, of balancing one against the other, and thus keeping a certain control over their acts. The persons chosen were not very great men, even—of no such rank or importance as the head of the house of Douglas, or other historical families; though probably this was done with the express intention of checking the progress of that very house of Douglas, of which you have already heard so much, and which was the most powerful in Scotland. It was feared, indeed, on several occasions that everything, even the crown itself, might fall into the hands of this great family. The two less important persons who were placed in power would probably fulfil their purpose better than a direct rival of the great Douglas could have done. These men were Sir Alexander Livingston, guardian of the king, and Sir William Crichton, Chancellor of the Kingdom. The little king had

but a hard time between them. Once he was carried away by the queen, his mother, out of Crichton's hands, in a great trunk filled with her fine clothes, to Stirling, where Livingston received him ; and a little later, Crichton waylaid the child when riding on his pony through the woods, and either kidnapped him or persuaded him to go back to Edinburgh. All this must have happened within a few years, for James was still only ten when he was witness to a dreadful deed, one of the worst that has ever disgraced our history ; but to tell you of that I must first remind you of some things you have already heard concerning the Douglasses, of whom Scotch history has always so much to say.

They had been at all times a noble and a gallant race ; and, though they were no less fond of growing rich and securing their own advantage than other people, yet they were always beloved as well as feared, and their great deeds and noble ways were delightful to the people, who were proud of them, even when there might be reason to complain of them. One of the earliest we hear of, took part with Wallace in the war of independence. Then came the 'Good Lord James,' as he is always called, who was Bruce's brother-in-arms, and almost as splendid a soldier, and as much admired and trusted as he was, one whose very name proclaims the honour in which he was held. Then came the Douglas of Otterburn, who conquered the Percies, and the Douglas of Halidon Hill, whom the Percies conquered and who fought by Hotspur's side against King Henry the Fourth, as you will read in Shakespeare, and finally died at Verneuil, fighting for France against Henry V.—Earl Tineman, as he

was called, because he always lost or 'tined' in battle. On many other occasions besides these, indeed, on almost every occasion when Scotland wanted a general, a Douglas was there ready to take the place. At the time of the accession of James I., they were almost at their greatest, though more evident in foreign history than in our own, the head of the house holding the title of Duke of Touraine in France, and treating with the French king almost on equal terms. It would have been natural that so very great a man should have been the guardian of the young king, but, as has been said, the other nobles were afraid of him, not only as the greatest among them, but because the Douglasses were never quite free of a suspicion that they might aspire to the crown, seeing that they, too, had the blood of Malcolm Canmore in their veins.

The head of the house died very soon after James I., leaving an heir not so young as the child king, but yet not much more than a boy. It was, perhaps, not to be expected that a young lord, holding so great a place and with no wise counsellor to guide him, should be specially prudent in his actions; and, as a matter of fact, the young earl proved a great disturber of the public peace, and, instead of helping to subdue the confusion and disorder into which King James's murder plunged the country, his proceedings made the state of affairs much worse, bringing back a great deal of the lawlessness and internal fightings and quarrels which James had put down. Great complaints were made of young Douglas before the Parliament, which was called together in 1439 to consider the lamentable state of the country: but he was invited to Edinburgh, with many flattering words,

by Crichton, who was the Chancellor of Scotland, and, at the same time, Governor of Edinburgh Castle. Young Archibald of Douglas accepted the invitation, and came to Edinburgh, with a gay party of young cavaliers and every sign of welcome and honour. Whether it had been understood by the Estates that summary punishment was to be inflicted upon the young man, or whether he was merely to be reasoned with and advised for his good, was never known.

Some of Douglas's attendants, however, seem to have taken fright as they rode up the Castle hill, seeing, probably, very grim looks upon the faces of the bystanders. They tried to persuade the young Earl, at least, to send back his young brother, the only other son of the house; but the boys were bold and would not be persuaded. They sat down gaily to the banquet, which had been prepared for them, along with the young king and the two Regents. The story goes that a bull's head, the sign of death, was brought in as one of the dishes, and placed before the earl; at all events, something occurred to give the alarm, and the two youths, looking round for some way of escape, found that all their attendants had been separated from them, and that they were helpless in the hands of their enemies. They were immediately seized, trying in vain to defend themselves, and were hurried out to the Castle hill, poor little King James, only ten years old, 'weeping sorely' and imploring Crichton to save them. But they were beheaded without mercy, in sight of the gaping crowd, as if this vile murder had been a public execution. A more horrible deed was never done.

After this terrible beginning, the history of Scot-

land, and of King James the Second for many years, is little more than a tale of the struggles of the house of Douglas to avenge itself and recover its ascendancy. The two boys thus murdered were, after a little interval, succeeded by their cousin, a strong and capable man, who again raised the fallen fortunes and pride of the house, and soon became paramount in Scotland, keeping up an army of followers, five thousand men-at-arms, it is said, among whom were a large number of knights and noblemen, as if Douglas himself had been a reigning prince. Such a potent personage soon swept all lesser influences out of the way, and the beginning of James's reign was passed almost in subjection to the great earl, on whom the title of Lieutenant-Governor of the Kingdom had been conferred. To strengthen himself in his position, already so great, and made more so by successful struggles against the English, and especially the battle of Sark—fought in 1448—Douglas made an alliance with the head of the Highland clans, the successor of that Donald who made his submission to James I. in Holyrood, as you were told, but who was now as great a rebel as his father had ever been, and stronger, having gained the title of Earl of Ross, and the position of a prince in the north. The Earl of Crawford and other nobles were also in the league with Douglas and had, consequently, the whole country in their power, and exercised every tyranny they chose, ruining those whom they disliked and promoting those whom they favoured, robbing even the Church, which was a dangerous thing to do, and crushing the poor at their pleasure.

The league of mutual support between these great

men, which made Scotland their slave and the king a cipher, was called the 'Bands,' and there was no force in the country that could stand against it. When everything was thus growing to a height intolerable to the country, Douglas committed a cruel personal offence against King James, who had interested himself in the fate of a gentleman of Ayrshire the guardian or 'tutor,' as it is called in Scotland, of one of Douglas's vassals, whom the earl held imprisoned and in danger of his life. The captain of the king's guard, Sir Patrick Gray, who was a relation of this unfortunate person, was sent to Douglas to request that the Tutor of Bomby should be given up to him, with the king's own warrant and signature. Douglas did not refuse, but he invited Sir Patrick to dine first and then see to his captive, while he himself gave a private order to some of his followers. The consequence was that when Sir Patrick, pleased and at his ease, came out to the castle yard after dinner, he was presented ironically by Douglas, with the man for whom he sought—but without his head, which had been taken off while the deceived messenger dined—one of the grimmest tales of all this grim and bloody history.

Such an insult and cruelty no doubt much increased the wrath of the young King James, now a man, and desiring, as was natural, to reign in his own kingdom. It is a pity that one bloody piece of treachery like this should so often be followed and avenged by another ; but we have no reason to suppose that James meant to take any such vengeance when he invited his powerful vassal to Stirling, where he was then residing, in order that they might talk over the state of affairs,

and try whether some better arrangement might not be made.

The Douglas came with great state, under the king's safe-conduct, and accompanied by his four brothers and an army of retainers, who, however, did not accompany him into the castle, where there was no room for such a crowd. The first day was spent in feasting and pleasant talk, but as they sat at supper, all strangers no doubt having left the castle for the night, and the gates being closed, the state of the country came uppermost, and began to be discussed. From one thing to another, there arose a question of the 'Bands,' that alliance of the vassals of the crown between themselves which reduced the king to a nonentity. The party rose from the table amid this heated talk, and the king led Douglas aside into an 'inner chamber,' probably one of those large recesses by a window which are common to all ancient halls. Here the conversation became more and more excited until James asked of Douglas, no doubt with some passion that he should break the Bands. Douglas refused, and James, with a cry of exasperation 'Then I shall,' drew his dagger and plunged it into his companion's breast. In such a case, the first movement always lets loose the storm; the group who must have watched the conversation keenly, not knowing what might happen, rushed round, and Douglas fell overpowered, Sir Patrick Gray, whom he had so cruelly deceived, striking the decisive blow. The body of the greatest man in Scotland was flung from the window into the court below. We may imagine what a dreadful moment must have followed when the king and his companions looked at each other

and realised what they had done in this moment of passion. But it could not be undone, and they had to face the position as best they could.

Earl Douglas left four brothers behind him as brave as he, and with all his power unbroken : but, nevertheless, his death was the signal for an entire change in Scotland. The league which James broke with his dagger, fell to pieces, and what with the power of the king's name, against which directly the hardiest rebels (except in the far north) hesitated to strike, and the help of other nobles, eager to escape from the ascendancy of the house of Douglas, especially a younger branch of that house itself, the Douglasses of Angus, the face of affairs was completely changed. The Douglas lands were forfeited, and thus a great deal of territory returned, nominally at least, to the crown.

You must know that, while all these stirring and dreadful events were going on, the Estates, or Parliament of Scotland, kept meeting occasionally, now for one reason, now for another, and making laws which, perhaps, did not do very much good for the moment, but were of great advantage whenever the country and the officials of the crown had time and quiet enough to carry them out. The Scots Parliament at this time was very anxious that the crown should keep its newly-acquired lands for itself, and not distribute them to Earl Angus and other people, and so help to erect some other new power, with more influence and wealth than was good for it, to raise up new dangers for the state. It was also much concerned for the state of the vassals of these nobles, especially of the poor people, whose holdings were

endangered by all such changes. And a law was made that leases were to hold good, however the estates might change hands, so that whether a Douglas or a Gordon or a Lindsay was the lord, the farmer and the cottars might be secure. This will show you how, while you are looking at the fine doings in the foreground, or hearing those terrible adventures and stories of vengeance and of blood, something which is really of more importance is often going on in the background the work of the country progressing quietly, if slowly, and wise men taking what care they could that it should be protected, and the poor people be sure of their daily bread.

James had a reign after this of about eight years, and we hope repented of his murder of the Douglas; yet he must have been tempted to believe, all the same, that it was the best thing that could have happened for his throne and his kingdom. This was the time when the dreadful wars of the Roses were going on in England, and no doubt the Scots took advantage of the fact that their powerful neighbour was too much engaged with her own affairs to notice what went on over the borders. It was thought an excellent moment to get back the strong castle of Roxburgh, which had been retained by the English, and the Scots army, under James II. himself, set out to besiege that castle. But though it was taken, it was a sad victory for Scotland. In those days the use of artillery had very lately begun, and the Scots had acquired some great guns of which they knew very little, but were extremely interested about. One of these huge guns was being used against Roxburgh, instead of the cumbrous machines of war which had been common

before, and King James was very eager to see 'how it worked.' He was standing imprudently near, watching the whole process, and noting everything, when the monster suddenly exploded, and, in a moment, just when Scotland was taking breath and recovering from her troubles, the king was killed, and anarchy once more began.

This was the sad fate of these gallant Stewarts ; just when they had overcome their enemies and were beginning to see a happy future before them, disaster returned to them and to Scotland. Once more it was a child, incapable of rule, eight years old—with a foreign mother, Mary of Guelders, and very doubtful friends, who was rapidly crowned as James III. over his father's grave. The death of James took place on the 3d August 1460. He is known in history as James with the fiery face, from a birth-mark which he had on one cheek.

CHAPTER IX

JAMES III

JAMES III., however, was an exception to all the others of his name. He was not of the order of the knights so much as of the peaceable scholars and lovers of art, who were not much wanted at that time in Scotland, nor understood at all. The times required a bold and able man who could really lead his nobles and govern his kingdom, for there were many dangers around him when he began his independent career. The banished Douglas was at the English court, plotting evil things against Scotland in the bitterness of his heart ; and, though James had a noble tutor and guardian in Bishop Kennedy of St Andrews, who had already become a conspicuous man in the previous reign, yet this great ecclesiastic died while he was still a boy, and perhaps the comparatively peaceful education given to him under the wing of his reverend tutor, and in the seclusion of St Andrews, may have cultivated in him the tastes which proved fatal to him. When Kennedy died, a family of the west of Scotland, called Boyd, came into the front of affairs. They were a romantic as well as powerful race, and, though they managed to run away with the king, or something very like it,

and get him entirely into their power, they do not seem to have used their power badly, or oppressed the people during their brief success.

The eldest son and heir of this house, afterwards Earl of Arran, was married to the king's elder sister, the Princess Margaret, and has every appearance of having been a noble knight and honourable person, though he loved power and to have the control of the national affairs as many noble men have done. His power, however, was short-lived; he had the credit of deciding and carrying through the king's marriage to a princess of Norway, through whom the islands of Shetland and Orkney were finally attached to the Scottish crown; but when he returned to Scotland with the bride, Boyd discovered that his day was over, and was obliged to flee to England, where he, too, indignant and injured, hung about the English court, though with no such ill effect as Douglas. Shortly after, the Duke of Albany, James's own brother, joined the previous fugitives, and his memory is not free from the reproach of having, at least, negotiated with the King of England in a manner unfavourable to his native country. The history here is not a pleasant one. James had two brothers, Albany and Mar, both of whom were more popular than himself, and it is said that a conspiracy was discovered to put one of them on the throne, which led to the flight of Albany and the murder of Mar, the third brother, which events formed a miserable episode in James's reign. We know nothing about Mar, who died in prison, but it is evident that Albany was a man much more in accordance with the mind of his time than James, who loved building, and the decoration of his palaces,

and music, and the persons who cultivated these arts, better than either war or statesmanship, and did not care for the society of the great personages of his realm half so much as for that of the men who designed and beautified his halls, or played skilfully the instruments he loved.

We approve highly now of a king who cultivates these tastes, and takes notice of and distinguishes the artists of his time; but it is seldom good, we fear, either for his kingdom or himself, even now, when he does this to the exclusion of his natural companions; and still more foolish is it when he turns a master builder, such as his favourite, Cochrane, into the ruler of a kingdom, putting him over the heads of those who have been born and trained to rule. Cochrane could, perhaps, have built a noble castle or palace—he is supposed, I think, to have been the architect of the inner court of Stirling Castle—but he was not fit to take the government of Scotland into his hands. Louis XI. of France was a man who governed his kingdom by even worse means, and made his barber and hangman his familiar companions; but then Louis was himself an exceedingly able and sagacious man, and made them his instruments, without becoming their dupe and tool. James was of an indolent and quiet nature, and perhaps he was amused by the swagger of Cochrane, who behaved like the usual beggar on horseback, surpassing everybody in his magnificence and in his presumption. But the lords of Scotland could not endure this upstart, and no more could the common people endure Cochrane's exactions, or the new coinage which he issued, mingling the gold and silver with baser metal, which is a thing more quickly resented than almost any

other trick of bad government, and which was one of the favourite's ways of enriching himself.

Besides Cochrane the architect, and a musician called Rogers, a certain Leonard, described as a smith, probably one of the old gifted artisans who worked in iron—and a tailor and fencing master are named as members of the little coterie who surrounded the monarch. James's defects had been concealed while he lived under the shadow of the wise Bishop Kennedy, and even of the gallant, if ambitious Boyd: but they became very manifest when he appeared as the centre of this undistinguished group, turning from all his natural associates, and especially, as you have heard, from his brothers, and allowing his favourites to conduct the affairs of the kingdom.

Things in Scotland were thus in a very bad way when England settled into domestic peace after the wars of the Roses, and Edward IV. had time to consider what he could do to regain some of the advantages which had been lost in the north. The exiled Douglas had helped to stir in the English court the old dreams of annexing or at least subduing Scotland, and these became stronger when the unpopularity of the king and the dissatisfaction of the Scots nobility became apparent. Edward, it is said, sent for Albany, who had escaped to France, and made a treaty with him, promising to place him on the throne of Scotland if he would acknowledge the English king as his suzerain, that old claim which had been so often made and so fiercely rejected. It is the only evil thing that history knows of Albany that he should have accepted this bargain. When, however, it was known in Scotland that Edward was about to invade the country at

the head of an army, to place Albany on the throne, the old patriotic indignation and rage burst forth again, and King James, had he had the heart and courage to lead his army and meet his enemy, would soon have been restored to popular favour. Even the Parliament, the grave Estates of the realm, foamed at the mouth with national wrath, and denounced the English king as 'usurper Edward, calling himself King of England,' for indeed they had been inclined to the Lancastrian side in the struggle in England which was now past, and had received and sheltered Henry VI. and his queen for some time in Edinburgh. A great army was accordingly assembled, and marched towards the border to repel the threatened invasion; but various things happened by the way which show how sore and angry the Scots nobles were with their own king and his friends, notwithstanding the great object with which they had set forth.

Cochrane, who was the chief of these favourites, accompanied the king, with special charge of the artillery, which, as you have heard, was still a new thing, and sometimes as dangerous to those who had charge of it as to those against whom it was aimed. Cochrane was now a very great person, bearing the title of Earl of Mar, the title which had belonged to the king's murdered brother, and far more splendid in his dress and equipments than any of the Scots lords, whom he pushed out of the king's council, appropriating everything to himself and his supporters. His pride seems to have become so intolerable that, after a few days' march, the nobles resolved to bear it no longer. They held a solemn meeting in the parish church of Lauder, where they halted for the night, to

discuss what was to be done. After much debating, they decided to take possession of the king, without harm to his person, and to convey him to Edinburgh, while they made short work with his unworthy dependents. When they had come to this decision, there was a pause, and one of the company, Lord Gray, repeated to the dark assembly the fable of the mice who resolved to hang a bell round the cat's neck, that they might have warning of his approach. But who was to take the first step? 'I'll bell the cat,' said the Earl of Angus, the head of that second branch of the Douglas family which had now taken the place of the elder in Scotland. He was known by the name of Bell the Cat all the rest of his life.

At this moment there came a great knocking at the door, and an imperious demand for admission on the part of the Earl of Mar. It was the victim coming to offer himself to the slaughter, and there must have been a thrill of wonder in the fierce joy with which Angus rushed forward to do what he had undertaken. Cochrane came in in his splendour, thinking, no doubt, to overwhelm them in their plottings by his mere presence. He was no coward, at least, and held his own as long as was possible against his enemies. He had even audacity and spirit enough to bid them hang him with one of the silken cords from his tent instead of the rough rope with which they were proceeding to carry out his sentence. As soon as the other favourites were secured, the king was brought out of his quarters and compelled to mount his horse and take up a position on the river side, while all his friends were hanged from the bridge of Lauder before his eyes; one only, a youth, and a Ramsay, of good

lineage, escaped by jumping upon the king's horse behind him and clinging to his master. When this grim piece of work was over, the lords conveyed James back to Edinburgh Castle, where he remained in seclusion, closely guarded, though treated with every appearance of respect. This curious incident happened in the year 1482.

All this time we hear no more of the English invasion, which that army had been called together to oppose. Perhaps the Duke of Albany, when it came to the point, hesitated to take part against his native country. At all events, when he did come forward, it was in a character totally different from that of an invader. After King James had been for a few months in a sort of imprisonment in Edinburgh Castle, Albany suddenly appeared, accompanied by King Edward's brother, the Duke of Gloucester, Richard, who was afterwards Richard III., the cruel and evil man who murdered the little princes in the tower, and did a great many other terrible things, in order to secure the English throne for himself—'Crook-back Richard,' as Shakespeare calls him, making such a picture of him as can never be forgotten, and which you will find in the play called 'Richard III.' For once in his life, however, Richard was of no account at all. The assembled lords received Albany very courteously, and asked what he wanted. His escort, some say of a thousand, some of three thousand, fighting men, seems to have marched through the Lothians quite peaceably, doing no harm and receiving none. Albany, it would appear, had quite forgotten that he had once intended to be a traitor. He asked only that James, his brother, might be set free. Probably the lords felt that by this

time the inconvenience of holding the king imprisoned in his own capital had gone far enough, and they immediately granted the duke's prayer. 'My Lord,' said the Chancellor of Scotland, 'we will grant you your desire ; but as to that man that is with you, we know him not, nor yet will we grant nothing to his desire.' They would not permit it to be supposed for a moment that the influence of England had anything to do with the matter.

Albany remained for some time with his brother after James was set free, acting as a sort of prime minister and helper in governing the country, until the king felt secure enough to act for himself, when Albany was once more obliged to take to flight, in danger of his life. It would seem that James's jealousy and terror of his own family had now gone so far that his own son had become the object of his alarms, and Prince James, the eldest of his family, was kept in partial confinement and brought up apart. Nor would there ever seem to have been any real reconciliation between the king and the nobility. He assailed such of them as he could when his hands were free, but dared not attempt any struggle with Angus and his party single handed. After several years of a suppressed struggle, however, the situation became so dangerous that he seems to have made up his mind to a determined attempt against them, and, having prepared Edinburgh Castle to withstand a siege, he crossed the Firth to Fife in Sir Andrew Wood's great embattled ship—too splendid for a ferry boat—and travelled rapidly to the north, rousing the country to support his cause. There were always enough of personal enmities and feuds to make this no difficult thing to do ; and the king's

name was of great weight when it came to civil war, so that James had soon collected a considerable army to avenge his wrongs and crush his enemies.

With this force, he marched to the neighbourhood of Stirling, and there prepared to meet the other army of the barons who had assembled with Angus at their head, bringing the young Prince James with them, whether by his own will, or by force, will never perhaps be known. The evening before the battle, one of James's supporters, Lord Lindsay of the Byres, made him a strange present. It was believed by all that the king was a coward, though no actual proof of this accusation had ever been given. Lindsay presented James with 'a great grey courser,' telling him the wonderful qualities of the horse, which, 'if well sitten,' would carry him faster than any horse in Scotland, either 'to fly or to follow.' Whether this was a jest or an insult, or a mere phrase meaning nothing, no one can tell, but it soon acquired a bitter ironical meaning in history. James mounted this horse next morning, the 18th June 1488, and rode out to a neighbouring hill to see his enemies marching towards him in full array of battle. They, too, displayed the royal banner of Scotland—they had his son among them. No one can tell what dreadful thoughts may have been in the mind of this wretched man. He had been told that his great danger was from his own family, and for this he had consented to the murder of his brother Mar, and had driven his brother Albany to save his life by flight; but it was in vain to attempt to escape from his doom, for here was now his son advancing against him.

Panic seized hold upon the unhappy king as he

stood and watched all the familiar banners—Douglas and Home and Hepburn—the greatest families of Scotland. He ought to have been in the front of his own forces, leading his men, but he had no heart for that. And here he was alone on the back of a swift horse, and the broad country before him, the road leading to his strong castle at Edinburgh and safety. He must have been a coward, for he fled, not calculating the chances of success which he might yet have, forgetting everything but the despair which seized upon him; yet, no doubt, many bitter thoughts of failure and disappointment mingled with his terror. He fled across the plain of Bannockburn, so full of recollections of valour and victory, in a blind panic of misery. He rode badly, and his gallant horse required to be ‘well sitten.’ No doubt the noble animal was out of sympathy with such a craven rider, and in their wild career through the village of that name, it was startled by a woman drawing water at the well (calmly going about her work though a battle was about to begin within ear-shot) and threw him in his heavy armour. The poor people dragged him, as best they could, into the mill close by, and no doubt loosened his helmet, and did what they could to lay him at his ease. Nothing had happened to him except this fall, which could not have killed him, but James must have thought he was dying, for he asked for a priest. ‘Who are you?’ asked the miller’s wife. ‘This morning,’ answered the unhappy man, ‘I was your king.’ The woman ran out to her door calling for help, and someone passing by answered that he was a priest and knelt down by the king’s side as if to hear his confession. Instead, however of giving him

spiritual help, this man, who was probably not a priest at all, drew his knife and stabbed the unfortunate king. And it was in this miserable way that James Stewart, the third of the name, came to his end. He was the only coward of his race, unless it were James VI., his great-great-grandson, who was, perhaps, not more brave, though much more fortunate, than he.

When the fact of his flight was known, after some slight skirmishing, arms were dropped on either side, and both armies dispersed in trouble and dismay. It was not known for some time what had become of the king—one conjecture being that he had escaped and taken refuge in Sir Andrew Wood's great ship which still lay in the Firth at his service. After a time of anxious uncertainty, the rebel lords met again in Edinburgh, and Sir Andrew Wood was brought before them to be questioned on this point. The great seaman, if no one else, was loyal to the king. Prince James, the heir, here comes for the first time before us in a most touching and remarkable way. 'Sir, are you my father?' he asked the sea captain, with an evident ignorance of his father's appearance, which tells the whole sad story of the boy's seclusion and separation from his family, and the king's superstitious dread of his own son. It is said that James IV., never quite forgave himself for having taken part against his father, and wore an iron belt round his waist, under his clothes, for all his life after, as a penance, as you will read in Sir Walter Scott's noble poem of 'Marmion,' which is chiefly about the king, and tells a portion of his story far better than the account I am about to give you can do.

James III. occupied the throne for about six years after he was freed by his brother from the rebel lords, which happened in 1482. He was killed in 1488, at the age of thirty-five.

CHAPTER X

JAMES IV

JAMES IV., who came to the throne in 1488, was as different from his father as it is possible to imagine. He was a knight of romance, full of the old spirit of adventure, ready for any dangerous feat that could be put into his head, fond of movement and commotion, the kind of man who was sometimes, especially in those old days, when so much depended on the king, dangerous to the state—but always beloved by the people: for the most serious of us love a noble prince, who makes a great show in the world, and is brave and courteous and splendid, as we feel a prince should be, even if he is rash and incautious as well. He brought upon Scotland the most dreadful and crushing defeat she ever had to bear, yet Scotland loved and was proud of him, while she was deeply ashamed of his father who was, as people say, nobody's enemy but his own. Though he was quite free of his father's love for inferior company, he had a hearty liking for the common people, which is a very different thing, and would sometimes roam about the country seeking adventures and seeing everything that went on, like the Caliph in the *Arabian Nights*,

Haroun Alraschid, of whom I am sure most of you have heard. If not, you must try to get Lane's translation of the *Arabian Nights* and read about him.

James IV. would sometimes pass the night at a farmhouse in the country, keeping all the farmer's household merry, sometimes in the dress of a good yeoman on his travels, sometimes like one of the privileged beggars, called Gaberlunzie in those days, who were always welcome, and repaid the charity they received with story and song. There are many tales of the wrongs he redressed and the kindnesses he did in this way to poor people whose true story he thus heard unknown to themselves. He was, or was supposed to be, a poet too, like his great grandfather James I., and various merry ballads which have come down to us were supposed to be his ; but you know it is the fashion now to throw doubt upon all such traditions, and the more strongly a man's contemporaries assert that he did certain things, the more sure are the critics, a few hundred years after, that he did not do them ; which is a thing I do not myself understand and cannot explain.

There was a good deal of uncertainty and a sort of paralysis of public affairs in Scotland until it could be quite settled that James III. was really dead ; but things otherwise were better than had been the case at the accession of the two previous kings, for James IV. was almost a man (only sixteen ! but the stress of great events made that a much more serious age than it could ever be to a boy in a peaceful home) and was able at once to enter upon the work of government.

During all this period, as I have already pointed out

to you, life was going on in Scotland steadily enough, and the Estates were quietly sitting behind backs not much disturbed by all the commotions in the front of the scene, passing sometimes very wise laws, and taking great care of the interests of the people. It must have been chiefly the burghers, the priests and the smaller nobility, the lawyers and sometimes the scholars, who kept up this quiet work, for the great lords had far too much on their hands, fighting and struggling for the supreme power, to pay much attention to these other matters. The parliament, for one thing, got into trouble with the Church of Rome, which was then the one only and paramount church, on a question which had already rent Europe in pieces, and occasioned something like a civil war, or rather a succession of civil wars, in every country on the Continent.

This was the manner of appointment to vacant benefices which the Pope held should be by election, subject invariably to his approval : and which the state held should be by appointment of the king. These benefices, especially among the higher ranks of the clergy, the bishops and the abbots of great monasteries, carried with them the position of important landed proprietors as well as of priests ; and therefore it would have been a danger for the country if the crown had had no power over them. But on the other hand, it seemed a just arrangement that the canons of a cathedral should elect their own bishop and the monks their own head : though this freedom might be sometimes turned into bondage, since the Pope thus became the final authority and was apt to fill these great places, whenever he could, with priests devoted to his interests. This, at all events, was what the people everywhere

believed he did, which came to much the same thing ; and all the ambitious priests who wished to rise in the world, took great care to be well reported and thought of in Rome.

The Estates of Scotland, as of every other country, opposed this arrangement with all their might, and there arose a constant struggle with the Church on the subject, kings and parliaments being all of the mind that these appointments should be made by the authorities of the country. Much later, indeed in very recent days, a similar question again arose in Scotland, and made a very great commotion, being precisely the question (without any Pope to interfere) upon which the Free Church in Scotland left the Established Church ; but it is not our business to discuss that matter here.

There was another custom of the age against which the Estates set themselves, and that was the custom of appealing law cases to Rome, which people who felt themselves aggrieved had a way of doing. It stands to reason that the law of so far distant a country as Scotland was but little understood in Rome, and therefore it was quite natural that a man who had friends at court had a much better chance of success than he who had none. Thus, however just the Pope might wish it to be, it was scarcely possible that strict and impartial justice should be done.

On these subjects the Scots Estates had many quarrels with the Church, as, indeed, was the case everywhere. And by this time there had begun to appear in Scotland religious people who disapproved of many things in the Church, and one man had even been burned as a heretic—a step which did not by any

means seem so dreadful then as it does now. Also, but of this I am not convinced, it is believed that the exactions of the Church of Rome were specially great in Scotland, and that the people were oppressed by the fees and payments they had to make, and by the ill behaviour of the clergy, and especially of the monks. Of this, however, I do not think there is very much evidence, for the same stories are told, and the same accusations made in almost every European country, only in Scotland they seem to have taken a greater hold than elsewhere.

When we return, however, to the foreground of the picture, if we may so express it, nothing could be more hopeful and bright than the coming of this young James, and the way in which he began his royal life in Edinburgh. He was ready to listen to everybody's grievances and help them if he could, with always an inclination, which was the purpose of his race throughout, to keep down the power of the nobles, and fortify his own position by the sympathy of the people. And he was open to every suggestion that meant fun or fighting, though, at the same time, he could be quite serious when he liked, and thought much of the trade of the country, and her ships and everything that could be to her advantage. One thing he did was to build a great vessel, still greater than the *Yellow Carvel*, which was Sir Andrew Wood's ship, built of oak ten feet thick, upon which the artillery of the time made no impression. It was, in the fifteenth century, what our ironclads are now ; and who can tell that we may not return to something of the kind, seeing our great ironclads often behave so badly when they are at sea ?

Sir Andrew Wood, who comes quite suddenly into

notice at the death of James III., and who was much honoured and esteemed by James IV., was one of the first and greatest of Scots sailors. He seems to have been the sole representative of what would be called a Royal Navy at that period : that is, he was a sailor of fortune, like the many soldiers of fortune, ready to act in the public service when the service or the pay pleased him, though retaining his liberty to act at other times for his own interests or pleasure. He won a sort of naval battle with the English in 1490, presenting his captives to the king, who, in his turn, sent them back to Henry VII., as at once a warning to other invaders, and a sign of chivalrous amity on his own part.

James married Margaret Tudor, the daughter of Henry VII. and sister of Henry VIII., and by no means unlike the latter monarch in character, in the year 1502. The marriage was celebrated with great splendour, and no doubt this royal pair held a more splendid court at Holyrood than had ever been seen there before, for the crown was richer by means of many forfeitures of the rebel lords, and both James and his wife loved magnificence and display. There is a description extant of the clothes he wore during the week of his marriage which would make you stare with amazement. Our great people on such occasions wear ordinary dress like other gentlemen, but James was dressed in cloth of gold and silver, covered with jewels, and rich doublets of velvet and embroideries that were worth half a province ; and his armour was wrought with wonderful arabesques of inlaid gold and silver, and everything that he touched was splendid with ornament, though probably in a great many

ways he was much less comfortable in the circumstances of his life than we are. It will give you pleasure, I am sure, to read the following description of him, which was sent by the Spanish ambassador to Spain, where the authorities would have liked very much indeed to have had a daughter to give him, and were disposed to be half sorry that they had proposed Katherine to Prince Arthur of England before they thought of King James. Poor lady, she would have been better off with him, in the beginning of his career, at least, than with Henry VIII., who divorced her shamefully, as you know, and drove her into her grave. This is what the Spanish ambassador, accustomed to very fine gentlemen indeed in his own country, thought of James :—

‘The king is twenty-five years old ; he is of noble stature, neither tall nor short, and as handsome in complexion and shape as a man can be. His address is very agreeable. He speaks the following foreign languages—Latin very well, French, German, Flemish, Italian and Spanish. He likes very much to receive Spanish letters. The king speaks besides the language of the savages who live in some part of Scotland and of the islands (Gaelic). He is well read in the Bible, and in some other devout books : he is a good historian. He fears God and observes all the precepts of the Church. He does not eat meat on Wednesdays and Fridays. He would not ride on Sundays for any consideration, not even to mass. He says all his prayers. Before transacting any business he hears two masses—after mass he has a cantata sung, during which he sometimes dispatches very urgent business. He gives always liberally, but is a very severe judge, especially in the case of murderers. Rarely, even in joking, a word escapes him that is not the truth. He prides himself much upon it, and says it does not seem to him well for kings to swear their treaties as they do now : the oath of a king should be his royal word, as was the case in bygone ages. He is courageous even more than a king should be. I am a good witness of it ; I have seen him often undertake most dangerous things in the late wars. On such occasions he does not take the least care of himself. He is not a good captain, because he begins to fight before he has given his orders. He said to me that his subjects serve him with their persons and goods in just and unjust quarrels exactly as he likes, and that therefore he does not think it right to begin any warlike undertaking without being himself the first in danger.’

This is a long extract to make, but I wish you to see what a foreigner thought of this noble young king. He was not only a poet himself, but he had a very fine poet called William Dunbar attached to his court, who was also a priest, though not so good in that character as in his poetry, and who consequently never succeeded in getting a benefice from the king. Dunbar wrote a very fine poem on the marriage of James and Margaret of England, called the Thistle and the Rose, which I don't doubt you could read if you took a little trouble, and were not afraid of the antique spelling ; and also many other shorter poems, some of which give us a wonderful view of the condition of Edinburgh in the beginning of the sixteenth century. You will find a description of that too, but not so familiar, in *Marmion*, which is easier reading.

One of the great objects of King James's reign was to pacificate, as it is called, the Highlands ; to break the power of the great northern chiefs, and especially of the Lord of the Isles, with whom, not very long before, Edward IV. of England had made a treaty, as if he had been an independent prince, engaging him to harass and oppress the King of Scotland from the north, while England attacked him from the south. To have such a rebellious and fierce adversary in one of his own subjects was impossible to the peace of the country, and James took various measures for the subjugation of the Highlanders and Islanders, with but partial success. He certainly did accomplish the humiliation of the Lord of the Isles, whose principality was broken up and his strength destroyed, so that he never again became a danger to the realm : though it

was not till long after that peace became possible for any lasting time on the Highland line.

While James was following this great enterprise he became involved in various quarrels with England, specially in respect to the Scots shipping, which by this time had risen into importance, but which the English ships, more numerous and stronger, still made constant attacks upon, as interfering with their trade. And one of the chief incidents in James's reign was the romantic story of Perkin Warbeck, an adventurer, and indeed impostor, though evidently a man of fine qualities, who pretended to be the Duke of York, one of those sons of Edward IV., whom their uncle, Richard III., caused to be murdered in the Tower. It was said that the younger of the boys had escaped and that this Perkin was he, and, as it was Edward's sister the boy's aunt, who acknowledged and sent him forth, he was received both in France and Scotland as an important prince and the real heir to the English crown. James, especially, took him up with great warmth, gave him a wife of royal blood, and raised a small army to invade England on his behalf; but, after many romantic incidents, this expedition came to nothing, and Perkin's claims were proved to be false. His beautiful wife, the White Rose of Scotland, as she was called, lived long in the court of Henry VII. of England in honour and peace. .

It was not, however, on this account, nor for any sufficient cause, though there were various provocations on the part of England, that James undertook his last fatal enterprise. Henry VIII. had begun to threaten France with a new invasion, and the 'auld

ally' of Scotland looked to James for assistance. That the Scots king should make a diversion by invading England was the old established custom in every such emergency. On this occasion he was asked to do so in a manner specially attractive to his disposition. The Queen of France sent him a letter, in which, according to the romantic custom of chivalry then dying out, she chose him for her knight, and bade him march into English soil in honour of his lady. Such a request was one which no true knight could disobey, though probably there was not a king in Christendom but James, at this advanced period of history, who would have given the same immediate response. But he was knight first and king afterwards. At the same time, we must remember that this had always been the policy of the two countries, and that it was an opportunity of gain for Scotland, should it be successful, as well as of help for France. James accordingly called together his army, which was not a standing army like those which we are familiar with now, the young reader must recollect, but a feudal army, formed by the calling out of all the great vassals of the crown, who, in their turn, called out their vassals, down to the small proprietor, who, perhaps, had but one yeoman to follow him to the field.

It is said that on this occasion the barons and their retainers came out very reluctantly, as there was no special grudge against England in anyone's mind, and no great desire to fight; but, nevertheless, a very great army was drawn together, ready to march against the English, who, on their side, had no particular wish for so unnecessary a fight. The feeling of the country was so strong against it, that all

kinds of evil prophecies were current in Scotland. One of them was said to have been delivered by no less a personage than St John himself, who was said to have appeared in the kirk dedicated to him at Linlithgow with a message from the Blessed Virgin, forbidding the king to go to war; and another strange and terrible scene was supposed to have taken place at the Cross of Edinburgh, where a spectral herald from the unseen world stood forth and summoned King James and his nobles by name to appear within forty days before the tribunal of God. 'Whether this summons was proclaimed by vain persons, night walkers for their pastime, or if it was a spirit, I cannot tell,' says our chief historian of the time. All this you will find in *Marmion*, as well as an account of the dreadful battle of Flodden, which followed, and which was the most terrible defeat ever sustained by the Scots. All the preliminaries were unfortunate, the tactics were bad—James, as the Spanish ambassador said, being no general, but ever anxious to be himself in the front of the fight: and the result was that the great army was almost entirely destroyed, James himself perishing in the *mêlée*, so that it was with difficulty that his body could be found. Almost every great Scotch family lost either its head or its heir, and the loss was universal through every rank. Never has such a wail risen from Scotland as on the terrible day when this news spread through the country. The streets of the towns, and even the villages, were full of wailing women, all crushed by the same catastrophe, and the burghers of Edinburgh began in haste to fortify their town, which had grown out of the old bounds, many fine houses having been built outside

the walls. They doubted nothing that the English would carry out their victory and march upon the capital. But the English themselves were scarcely less startled than the Scots by so unexpected a victory, and did not follow it up, and the result of the fight was nothing but unexampled bloodshed and misery, and the loss of almost every man of note in Scotland. This terrible event occurred on the 9th September of the year 1513. James had then reigned twenty-five years, and had passed the fortieth year of his age. He was thus—excepting James I., whose reign, however, was much shorter—the longest liver of any among the five Jameses, though it was in the very prime and glory of his age that he fell.

The great disaster of Flodden made, however, an indelible impression upon the mind of Scotland. There is one sweet and plaintive old song still familiar to our ears, which embodies the wailing cry of the women for the husbands and sons who never came back. When you hear a country girl singing the ‘Flowers of the Forest’ you must remember that it was at Flodden that the flower of southern Scotland, the sons of Ettrick Forest, and many another desolated locality, were ‘a’ wede away.’

CHAPTER XI

JAMES V

JAMES V. was an infant not quite two years old at the time of Flodden, and the country again fell into all the evils of a regency, with this in addition, that there was no one naturally indicated to fill that place upon whom all could agree. The Queen, Margaret Tudor, does not seem to have secured the respect of the nation, though Sir Walter Scott makes a pretty picture of her sitting alone in Linlithgow, weeping because her king neglected her. Margaret, however, was not of the weeping kind; she married again very soon after her husband's death and was not much trusted either by the Scots or English, the latter of whom soon began to appear very conspicuously in Scotland, taking sometimes an open, and always a secret, share in everything that went on, and trying hard to guide the Scots, who were, as you know, determined above everything else, not to be guided by any English hand.

The country turned its eyes in this strait towards France where the Duke of Albany, of whom I have told you, the brother of James III., he whose conduct had always been apparently good and faithful, though

he was a traitor according to the treaties and secret papers—had taken refuge; and where he had died, holding in right of his wife the position of a great French lord. His son had succeeded him in all his French dignities, and held beside the great official position of High Admiral of France. It shows at once the fidelity of the Scots towards their royal house, and their confidence in their ally, that this was the man upon whom at once they fixed their eyes. He was brought over as Regent after King James's death, but it cannot be said that he had any success in Scotland in this capacity. He was a thorough Frenchman, luxurious and gay, fond of the amusements and excitements of a great court, and feeling himself an exile in the poor and distracted country which he despised, though he would not have objected to be king of it, had the Scots been willing to put the baby monarch aside.

Nothing, however, succeeded under Albany's sway. He was strong enough, indeed, to put down for the moment, by the help of his French soldiers, an attempt at a rising on the part of Angus, the young heir of that great title, who was the representative of all the Douglasses slain at Flodden, and whom the queen, taking a step in haste which she very soon repented at leisure, like her brother Henry VIII.—had married, scarcely a year after the death of her husband. But the country was torn by internal conflicts. The Douglasses and Hamiltons, a family which had risen into great power, had begun to struggle with each other for the mastery; and this conflict between two great houses, led on one occasion to such a riot and bloodshed in the streets of Edinburgh, that the affair

has found a place in the national history. It is known under the name of 'Clear-the-Causeway,' it being the object of each party to sweep the other at once from the streets of Edinburgh, and from all control of the affairs of the nation. It is an episode full of picturesque incidents as well as sharp sayings, those grim Scots always having an eye to a jest, whatever was going on. On this occasion, Gavin Douglas, the Bishop of Dunkeld, and uncle of Angus, who was also a poet of great reputation, and the translator of Virgil, went to another ecclesiastic, James Beaton, Archbishop of Glasgow, who was on the side of the Hamiltons, to beg him to use his influence to preserve peace. Beaton, who was deep in the strife, had rushed into one of the churches, flung on his clerical robes, and was about to celebrate vespers, by way of concealing his former unclerical occupation, when his brother of Dunkeld came to him on this pacific errand. Beaton laid his hand on his breast, assuring Douglas on his conscience that he had nothing to do with the matter. But under his robes his steel corselet sounded as he made this protest, and Douglas declared that the bishop's conscience 'clattered.' There was not much amusement, however, in the affair, in which a number of men were killed; but fights of this sort, though on a smaller scale, were of common occurrence in the streets of Edinburgh, and, indeed, of almost every other great town at that period. The shopkeepers were used to them; they shut up their shops and looked on, or sometimes even took part. The young reader will find a most lively picture of such a brawl in Sir Walter Scott's novel called *The Abbot*, though the date is a little later. Both parties were quite willing

and ready to turn their arms in temporary union against the Frenchmen when occasion served.

Albany came to Scotland in 1515. He remained with more than one interval of absence for nine years, until 1524, during which he did little that was of any importance to Scotland. He conducted two fatal expeditions across—though in one instance scarcely across, but only to the edge of—the border; in both cases, more in the interest of France than of Scotland, and accomplished nothing in either. One of these expeditions was so conspicuously useless, that it was called in history the Fool Raid: that is, the fool's or foolish raid; in which there was much show of warlike preparation, and nothing done. The only thing that maintained Albany's position at all, would seem to have been that England strongly opposed and tried to unseat him from it, which naturally made the Scots more determined in retaining him. After his last great failure, however, Albany, disgusted, asked leave from the Estates to pay a visit to France, and to his great amazement was refused. A few months later, he took the matter into his own hands, and went away in May 1524, to return no more.

The result of his desertion was that the country fell into even greater anarchy than before. Queen Margaret had quarrelled mortally with her husband Angus and divorced him, and was now on the eve of her marriage with a third husband, a young man, Henry Stewart, of little account. She was in constant want of money, and appealing to her brother, Henry VIII., for it; and by this means was more or less compelled to act in his interests. There was but one man in Scotland who seems to have had any great influence in the

country, and that was Beaton, now Archbishop of St Andrews, he whose conscience had been heard clattering under his chasuble. The English, as I have told you, made great efforts to get the command of Scottish affairs, and Cardinal Wolseley, who was then King Henry's prime minister, tried everything that a man could do to secure Beaton, either to subdue him altogether or to gain him to the English side; but in vain, for the Scotch archbishop was strongly established in his castle at St Andrews, with the sea for his defence, and would not be persuaded to come out of that stronghold or put himself within the reach of England. The English had a special reason for their strong interest in Scottish public affairs at this moment, for the little King James V. was next heir to England as well as Scotland. Henry VIII. had but one child, Mary, who, you know, afterwards got a very evil name when she came to reign in England, and he had not yet begun his career of divorces and re-marriages. No queen yet had ever reigned in her own right in England, so that even her birth did not make Mary quite secure. And James was the next heir; therefore it was very natural that it should be greatly desired in England to get this young monarch into good hands. There was some talk of the betrothal of the young king to Princess Mary, and some proposals about a French princess. The two countries, indeed, wrangled over his small body, now one of them in the ascendant, now another—and the country very uneasy and in a very uncomfortable condition, without any strong central authority, lying much in want of settlement, and very little satisfied with either of the two great opponents, their friend-foes, or foe-friends,

who thought only of their own advantage on either side.

When this struggle slackened a little, and Albany's return became impossible, there ensued another closer struggle in Scotland for the possession of James. Angus, who had been for some time in England, and was now the greatest enemy of his former wife, was 'let loose upon her,' as Henry had several times threatened, and, coming to Scotland, secured the uncertain reins of government for a time, and kept the young king under very secure control. But on a certain day in May 1528, young James, aged sixteen, found himself at Falkland Castle, in Fife, 'for the hunting,' with few attendants, and no very strict watch kept upon him. He seized the moment for escape, and, from that time, appears in history in his own person, a strong and capable monarch, severe and prompt in his measures, and with a very definite purpose in his mind.

This purpose was much the same as that which his ancestor, James I., had originated, and which had been more or less the inspiration of each successive James, as he took up in his turn the uneasy sceptre : and that was the subdual and control of the great nobles, whose power was almost that of lesser kings in the country, and who had again and again coerced the crown and oppressed the people, until their struggles between themselves, the falling of one and the rising of another, brought about a crisis. This crisis James now fondly hoped to make a final one. To overthrow the power of Angus was the first step, and in that he was almost cruelly successful, extinguishing, if not the house, yet, at least, the paramount power of the race. Other

great men, both in the north and south of Scotland, were subdued in a similar manner — Argyle, for instance, who, having received many of the possessions taken from the Lord of the Isles, when that principality was broken up, had made himself supreme in the Highlands, but was crushed remorselessly by the young king, who was determined, on his part, that there should be but one ruler, and not half a dozen, in Scotland. The equally lawless chiefs of the border, who kept that debatable land between England and Scotland in perpetual commotion, and bragged that they could maintain their sway, independent of both King James and King Harry, met with the same fate. The manner in which James dealt with one of the most important of these, John, or, as he was called Johnny Armstrong of Gilnockie, is commemorated in a fine ballad, which you will find in most collections, along with many more most spirited and interesting popular poems, all treating of this border warfare, and the exploits and misfortunes of its heroes.

I may say here that James V. showed also the gift of poetry which his father had, and that the credit of various poems is given indifferently to one and the other. And he had about his court, in his early days, the poet David Lindsay, one of the most remarkable of early Scotch writers, who amused the baby king and played tunes to him on his lute and told him stories in his childhood, of which the same David tells us in a very delightful poem, giving a vivid picture of the little king, whose first words were, *pa. Da. Lyn.*—play, Davie Lindsay. Lindsay became afterwards Lyon-King-at-Arms and a very great personage, whom you will meet in *Marmion*, and hear a great deal of when

you read that fine poem and spirit-stirring tale. And it is James V. who appears as James Fitz-James in *The Lady of the Lake* and whom you will find there, bearing in one of the scenes the title of King of the Commons, which popular affection bestowed upon him. *The Lady of the Lake* is all about his struggle with the Douglas family, which, however, unfortunately does not end so well, in fact, as it does in the poem. He was a knight and prince of romance like his father, worthy to be celebrated in poetry ; and, indeed, it is almost impossible to discriminate between them, and make sure which of the two was the Goodman of Ballangeich and hero of many pleasant adventures. But the fate of the Stewarts clung to him as to every king of his name.

There is a very pretty story told of a visit made by James to France, to see a lady, the daughter of the Duke of Vendôme, who was supposed to be a good match for him. They did not fancy each other, however, and James went to Paris to visit the King of France. Here the Princess Magdalen, who was in very delicate health, at once saw and singled out the King of Scots, who, on his side, was struck by her fragile beauty. She was very young, foredoomed to an early death, but, perhaps, the parents hoped, as so many other poor parents have done, that happiness might heal her ; and these two young people were married with great splendour and pomp, and many hopes. At least, she must have been happy, though for so short a time, for, when the young queen landed on Scottish soil in the month of May 1537, she kissed the shore of her new country for love of it and her king. She lived, however, only about six weeks, her journey probably

hastening her end ; and James afterwards married Mary of Guise, one of a powerful and able family ; a marriage which had a great and unfortunate effect on Scottish history in after days.

After this event, and in the middle of James's active reign, there seemed to come a sudden blight upon the young, active and vigorous monarch. It seems still but imperfectly understood how this change came. He had subdued the rebels in his own country, he had made peace both on the borders and in the distant Highlands. It was a peace sternly procured, and involving, as I have told you, many sharp measures, but yet it had been attained. And on the border, where neither property nor peace had been for a moment secure, 'a rushbush,' the people said, was now a sufficient guard for a cow, and flocks of sheep grazed in safety upon the debatable land. But in establishing himself so strongly, he had wounded and alienated his nobles on every side, all with the intention of doing impartial justice, but often sharply and almost cruelly, with the result of turning from him the minds of some, and making others very lukewarm in their support of the king.

On the other hand, he took no trouble to keep the peace with his uncle Henry of England, who, since his birth, had been ever anxious to get James under his influence, but had never succeeded. By this time that great event which we call the Reformation had taken place, or rather was taking place, in England, and there was great agitation of spirits everywhere upon religious questions. Henry VIII. had thrown discredit upon this great religious movement by adopting it, as many people thought, and still think, from

the worst of motives, in order that he might get divorced with freedom from the wives with whom he was dissatisfied, a proceeding which the Pope would not consent to : and also for the sake of the great wealth of the monasteries in England which he confiscated to the advantage of his exchequer, making royal fiefs of the rich church lands. Henry was very anxious to bring James round to his way of thinking, but did not succeed in so doing. James was surrounded on his side by strong churchmen, the most capable helpers he had in the government ; his wife, Mary of Guise, belonged to one of the most Catholic families in Europe, great defenders of the Pope and the Roman faith, and he was thus held to the old forms of religion by many bonds. The religious movement had by this time begun to spread into Scotland in the legitimate way, not by any intervention of authorities, who, indeed, were all opposed to it, and had already had one or two martyrs of whom I will tell you in another chapter ; but the Estates were strongly opposed to the new doctrines, as well as the king, who was not so much tempted as offended and revolted by the idea of robbing the Church and making himself rich at her expense, as his uncle had done.

In these circumstances, Henry made two or three attempts to have a meeting with his nephew, in which his object was not very clear. The Scots thought that he meant to entrap their king, and that if once in English hands, James would be thrown into prison, or at least kept in captivity until he had consented to acknowledge Henry's supremacy, or been persuaded to accept his uncle's new views in respect to religion.

The issue of much correspondence and many negotiations at length was, that the King of Scots consented, or seemed to consent, to meet Henry at York, where the English king came with great pomp to meet him. But whether it was the fault of the Scots Estates or his own, James did not keep his appointment, and, after waiting for a few days, the imperious Henry, who was not accustomed either to be disappointed or to be kept waiting, retired to London in high wrath, and immediately declared war against the Scots who had thus insulted him.

Up to this time James had still been an energetic monarch. He had made an excursion by sea round the northern part of Scotland, surveying the harbours and ports, and noting all dangerous points on the coast, which in itself was no small undertaking in those days. He had promoted industry everywhere, and had instituted mines, not for the underground wealth which the country still possesses, but, of all things in the world, for gold, which was found in sufficient quantity in the district of Clydesdale to supply material for a new coinage. He had been very severe in the punishment of offenders, especially those accused of conspiracy against his own life, which probably was the contemporary manner of describing the enemies of his government. One very dreadful example of this severity was the execution of Lady Glamis, the sister of the banished Douglas, for witchcraft, as was said : she was burnt on the Castle hill of Edinburgh, a sight which terrified and revolted many. Other dreadful executions took place on this spot, executions of nobles for conspiring against the king's person, and burnings of priests for heresies, though

James himself in his secret heart was said to have had inclinations that way.

All these things were perhaps signs that the spirit of the king was breaking, for a sudden outburst of cruelty is not an unusual manifestation of an agitated soul. Two sons were born to him and died in their infancy ; his nobles were unfriendly and held aloof ; he had begun, perhaps, to distrust the ecclesiastics who had been his chief counsellors ; and his health too, it would appear, had begun to fail. His spirit rose a little when the first skirmish between the two nations, not in itself much more than a border raid, turned to the advantage of the Scots : but failed again when, having himself led an army to the border and finding no enemy there to oppose him, the barons refused to invade English soil, though the king was eager to go on. They declared, which was true, that their feudal obligation was to defend Scotland but not to invade England : and forced James to return without striking a blow.

This last failure would seem to have been fatal to his spirit and strength. When another expedition was sent over the border a little later, he did not himself accompany it, but sent with the leaders a favourite of his own, called Oliver Sinclair, of whom very little is known, but who managed to set the nobles by the ears by a sort of dramatic trick, causing himself to be raised on the shields of the soldiers to read the king's commission to the army, a commission which appointed, or was supposed to appoint, the favourite to supreme command. The English army came upon them when they were all in wild excitement over this piece of news, and the result was a

disastrous defeat for the Scots. James was at Caerlaverock Castle when the news reached him. He was ill and miserable, though we are not told that he had any bodily disease. Another child was about to be born to him, and in deep gloom he awaited the news of that event. When he heard that the child was a girl, the shock broke his heart altogether ; for you will remember that a female heir had always been disastrous to Scotland. No doubt James remembered this in his dejection and dismay. He was surrounded by but a few followers in this dark moment, and evidently had no courage to resist the shock. He was heard to say to himself, 'It came with a lass, and it will go with a lass,' meaning the crown of Scotland, which had come to his family through Marjory Bruce ; then he turned his face to the wall.

He was only thirty-one when, in utter despondency, he, who had been so gay and strong, thus vanished out of life, a young man who ought to have still had all the glory of existence before him. But his spirit was broken before his time, and no one seems to have known why. Thus ended the five gallant Jameses of Scotland. The last of the name as you will presently see, had little in common with this race of (with one exception) chivalrous and gallant men. The death of James V. took place in the end of the year 1542.

CHAPTER XII

A TERRIBLE INTERREGNUM

THE infant born in Edinburgh, while her father was dying of grief and downfall in the south of Scotland, was MARY, of whom you have all heard, and of whom everybody has heard, even of those who know very little about history. She had the reputation of being the most beautiful woman of her time. She was, I think, one of the strongest, full of courage, vitality and personal character, a woman never to be beaten, although, which is a strange thing, but true, she was constantly beaten, the most unfortunate of women—a failure in every way, though never failing either in valour, or hope, or life. This is what is called a paradox ; it is a contradiction, and yet the more you hear of her, the more you will find it to be true. But when her father died so sadly, Mary was but seven days old, the most helpless of infants, in a country full of contending forces, all struggling against each other, fighting over her small body, endeavouring each party to get possession of her and settle her life in its own way. King Henry was the first of all these contending powers. His scheme was to betroth the baby queen in her cradle to his own delicate and fragile boy, Edward—just as it had been his plan

before to marry her father to Mary Tudor, his elder child, thus uniting the two crowns in one, in a speedier and easier way than by that conquest of Scotland, which his predecessors had attempted for the last three centuries, but had never been able to accomplish. No doubt this would have been an excellent expedient if it could ever have been carried out. He had a number of Scots nobles in his power at the time, some prisoners of war, some exiles who had taken refuge at the English court, and whom Henry had kept in hand against the moment when they might be useful. He 'let them loose' now upon their country as he had let loose Angus, her divorced husband, upon his sister Margaret at an earlier period. At neither time did they do much harm, for they had lost the confidence of the people, and were met on every hand by one of those reawakenings of the national opposition to England, and that determined resistance to every attempt at influence from the richer country, which, always existing in Scotland, rose periodically into a climax of passion. Henry had also a number of envoys of all kinds and an able ambassador in Edinburgh, endeavouring, by every argument and inducement, to bring about his wishes, but all in vain.

In Scotland, the regency had been conferred upon the Earl of Arran, a Hamilton, and like most of that race, of a yielding and vacillating temperament; though his softness was of a very deceptive character. You who have read the *Talisman* will remember a famous rivalry between Cœur de Lion and the Sultan Saladin, when Richard cut through a corselet of iron with his sword, but only blunted that great weapon

against a soft eastern scarf, which he could not cut at all. Arran was something like that shawl; they could not cut him nor crush him with any blow. He came out softly smiling on the other side, having baulked and bewildered all his opponents without losing his temper for a moment; though the advantages he gained were rather passive than active, a sort of mild holding on in his own person, without victory or absolute defeat. Angus, his old enemy, and the head of a still important house, was his chief opponent now; but the power of Angus was reduced almost to nothing, as I have told you, by the fact that he was working on the English side—Scotland being furiously, universally resistant to every English claim. On the other hand stood Beaton, the nephew of the archbishop whom you have heard of before, but now himself Archbishop of St Andrews, a cardinal, and a very powerful and able man, who was at the head of the French party, again very popular in the country, the ‘auld ally,’ as England was the ‘auld enemy’ of Scotland. The queen’s mother, Mary of Guise, was naturally on that side, and worked with Beaton with great skill, and what I am afraid we must call duplicity, making all the time very clever pretences to the Englishmen of maintaining their cause.

There were numberless smaller questions mingled with these, but the great question was between the English and the French party, as it continued to be for a long time; the question which should be uppermost, which should get possession of the little queen, and secure the control of Scotland. The sympathies of the Scots were almost entirely on the French side. Their French visitors had not always been satisfactory;

they had been contemptuous of Scotch poverty, and angry at Scotch freedom, but they had never attempted to restrain that freedom, or assert any claim to submission; whereas England never missed an opportunity to claim allegiance from the Scots, a fact which had embittered the country to an extraordinary degree. The most popular leaders lost their power as soon as it was so much as suspected that they favoured that English claim. 'There is not,' says the English ambassador, almost overawed by the violence of the national feeling, 'so little a boy but he will hurl stones against it, and the wives will handle their distaffs, and the commons universally will rather die, and many noblemen and all the clergy be full against it.'

King Henry was at last so exasperated by this national sentiment, that he gave up negotiations, and sent a savage expedition into Scotland with orders to burn and slay—not to fight battles, but to destroy everything on its path, killing the people, and burning towns and villages. This dreadful expedition went by sea, landing at Leith, which it destroyed, then pushing on to Edinburgh, where they set fire to the capital, so that it could be seen blazing for days and nights all over Fife and Lothian, all but the castle, which could not be taken. There was little advantage, however, gained by this except the weakening of the country. Other expeditions across the border were less successful, but the strength of the Scots was well-nigh exhausted when their final defeat at the battle of Pinkie drove them nearly to despair. The little queen, who was the object of all this strife, was removed from Stirling and placed for some time in

the shelter of the mountains in a little island on the lake of Monteith, where stood an Augustinian convent, and which was called Inchmahome, the Isle of Peace. Amid the ruins of the convent, which is still surrounded by a garden run to waste, with fruit trees bearing wild fruit, there are traces still of what is called Mary's child's garden. At last, however, the conflict came to a pause. France sent over a strong expedition to the aid of her ally, and with great precautions the little queen was conveyed to the coast and safely embarked at Dumbarton on the Clyde. She arrived in France in safety, notwithstanding all the efforts of the English to intercept the French fleet, and there was betrothed to the Dauphin of France, and trained in the French Court in every way most likely to ensure her future fate.

A pause then occurred in this bloody and dreadful passage of history. There had been war between England and Scotland for a number of years. It had almost crushed the weaker country, it had poured out blood like water, it had wasted the substance and destroyed the homes of the Scots, it had killed the king and put his heiress in deadly peril. How it was that during all that time the Scots had never been able to make any of those retaliations, which, at the very weakest points of history, they had hitherto accomplished, it is difficult to say ; probably because they had no strong central authority, and were distracted by the fact that so many of their natural leaders were under the influence of Henry and more or less bound to him: and also because a new and overwhelming interest, the Reformation, had begun to spring up in Scotland, which, no doubt, led men's thoughts aside in other

channels, and which I shall presently tell you of. Add to these the horror of those savage expeditions which you have just heard of, which were not fighting but massacre and bloodshed. With all this, however, Scotland, though crushed, was no more overcome than in her palmiest days. She was as far from surrender after Pinkie as before Bannockburn. If it is true to say of the English nation that they never knew when they were beaten, and still stood resisting when, by all the rules of war, they ought to have allowed themselves to be vanquished, it is doubly true of the Scots. The country was like a famous hero in the ballad of 'Chevy Chase'—

'For Widdrington I needs must wail
As one in doleful dumps,
For when his legs were smitten off
He fought upon his stumps.'

Scotland, too, fought upon her stumps, and, bleeding from every vein, still held out and stood fast; never so little a boy but he would hurl a stone, never so frightened a woman but she would make her distaff a weapon against the common foe. The strong castles closed their gates, and starved and stood; the great abbeys did the same; everything was taken from them, but nothing given up. King Henry raged ineffectually, he who could not bear to be thwarted. His armies baffled, without a battle, had to retire at last over the borders and his ships from the northern coast, while the Frenchmen sailed away with the little queen, and the country, amid its groans, exhausted what seemed its last breath in 'faint huzzas' over the safety of its sovereign lady and mistress, the most sacred majesty of six years old.

This terrible and exhausting warfare had almost, however, if I may say so, a permanent effect upon the temper and character of Scotland. To fight with an honest enemy for power does not seem to have any deteriorating effect upon a nation, terrible as war always is ; but to be subject to slaughter for slaughter's sake, relentless destruction carried on with no motive but that of injury, rouses every evil passion both in the injured and the injurers. The Scots were embittered, they were driven into ferocity, their natural contradiction and opposition became hatred. The French, who helped to stop the progress of the English arms, and to recover some of the strong places in Scotland, seem to have been horrified by the cruel hunger for vengeance which had come into the minds of those allies, who were once so chivalrous and so gay, conducting a raid or an encounter of arms as if it had been a tournament, courteous and generous to their foes as to their friends. One of the French historians tells a dreadful tale how the Scots would ransom an English prisoner, who had fallen into French hands, for the pleasure of torturing him to death. It is very likely that such an incident might once have occurred, and so given room for the well-known tendency of French writers to generalise ; but still that it should have occurred, however infrequently, is a terrible thing to confess.

The Scotch temper seems to have taken a bitter edge from that time. It is the general idea that it was the Reformation and John Knox that did this. I think it far more likely that it was the years of bitter and cruel suffering, the unjust and tyrannous interference, and the evident impossibility of delivering themselves as they had always done before by feats of

arms and honest fighting, which introduced this root of bitterness. Among other cruel wrongs done by the English forces were the destruction of many of the great religious establishments of the country—Melrose, Dryburgh, Coldingham and Kelso, a sin calmly set down to the score of John Knox and his followers, but of which they were wholly innocent. The beautiful Abbey of Melrose is said to have been ruined in order to destroy the Douglas tombs in it—it being impossible to strike the chief of that name himself—who had turned out of so little use, nay, even of injury to the English arms—in any other way.

In the comparative quiet that followed the escape of the little queen, Arran was displaced from the regency, and the queen mother, Mary of Guise, put in his place. No doubt the influence of the French, then much in the ascendant, brought this about, and she was an able and even judicious woman, anxious to do her best for the country, though more out of sympathy with it than ever now that the new force of religion, which to her was heresy, had risen to such strength among the Scots. With this new force the queen regent struggled until it crushed her. And it is now time to tell you, as well as we can, about this wonderful new development of faith and action, and its leaders and the place it had acquired in Scotland—more remarkable than that of any other national revolution.

CHAPTER XIII

THE REFORMATION

THE state of religious affairs throughout, not Scotland only, but the whole world, had come to a great crisis during the sixteenth century. The Church had grown very rich and very powerful during the whole middle age of history, a period which was now coming to an end. Bishops and archbishops had become great secular lords, with vast estates and feudal vassals and armed retainers of their own ; and the Popes, the heads of a great spiritual empire, which extended over the whole of Christendom, had set up very large pretensions, claiming to be the supreme authority in the world, to settle every dispute, and decide the fate of kings and kingdoms. There was, I think, a very great and noble idea in this, if it could have been made certain that every Pope should be the best and wisest man in Christendom, judging impartially, and knowing thoroughly the affairs of every nation ; but this was, of course, an impossible hope, so long as the Popes were but men like others. It is true that it was already a doctrine of the Church that the Popes were infallible when deciding anything in their official capacity, and that as Popes they could do no wrong ;

yet I do not think that at any period of history this was ever practically believed in, seeing that the world had long combatted the decisions of Rome, and the most devout kings and princes contested or denied her judgment. This had been the case even in the times when the Church was everywhere supreme in spiritual matters, and I think the spiritual authority of the Popes was brought into discredit, injured rather than strengthened, by their attempts to interfere in the concerns of the world. The great wealth of the bishoprics and monasteries and other ecclesiastical institutions, was, at the same time, a temptation to those who held them, who were not always the best of men any more than the Popes were. The heads of the Church often lived as the great secular nobles did, making war and taking a part in all the tumults of the time, as indifferent to religion as any of the careless people about, and doing greater harm to religion than any secular person could do, because the wicked things they did were set down by the people to the score of the Church—as if it had been that great institution of God that was cruel and grasping and luxurious and unclean, instead of merely the unworthy ministers who brought shame on her name.

All these evils had come to a great height in the beginning of the sixteenth century. The monasteries which, as you know, were originally houses in which men were united in different orders that they might specially serve God, and the poor who are the charge of God—keeping up continual prayers and giving help to all who required it—had become very corrupt, the monks often living in luxury and idleness, their original

purpose forgotten or turned into a contrary aim. You must not believe that this had always been the case, for the monasteries and convents, had been of the greatest use and advantage to the country in their day, and had preserved learning and carried on education and given protection to the weak, and constant unfailling charity to the poor ; and, indeed, even now in the sixteenth century, there was many a kind monk, and many a good and faithful parish priest, though they all suffered for the guilty among them, and it became common to think and say that all were guilty, without discrimination, or charity, or justice.

You have probably all heard something of the Reformation in Germany, and how Luther arose out of one of those same convents, very mournful and angry with all the abuses he saw around him, and especially because sinners could buy pardon for their sins, and even ‘indulgences,’ as they were called, so that they might continue doing evil without punishment : though what indulgence meant was only buying themselves off from the penances ordained by the Church. At the same time a great revolution had been made by the invention of the art of printing, so that people were able to read for themselves the Scriptures which had previonsly been interpreted to them solely by priests, who very often knew little more than they did. When they thus attained the power of reading the Gospels, they saw how very different the Church, as they saw it, was from that formed by the Apostles and messengers of our Lord, and their confidence in their teachers and priests failed all at once: while their minds were eagerly open to hear the new teaching which was more in accord with the Bible, and pro-

fessed to be founded on the Word of God, and on that alone.

In no country was this more the case than in Scotland. In England, though there had long been a great deal of rebellion against the Church of Rome, going on as it were under ground, and Wycliffe's translation of the Bible into English had affected the people very much, the first great public act against the old teaching was the breach with Rome made by Henry VIII. for his own objects, which were not good ones—a step soon followed by the confiscation of the monasteries and other ecclesiastical property, which was simply robbery, though it has been done since by every country in Christendom, and was justified by state policy at least. These facts have always thrown a certain discredit upon the Reformation in England, though in reality they retarded rather than increased the completeness of its progress. In Scotland it was quite different. King James V. was supposed to have personal leanings towards what was called heresy, but that I think only meant that he liked very well to see the monks made fun of, and enjoyed the stories against them which Sir David Lindsay made into a poem, to be recited or acted before the court, showing all the wickedness and luxury and love of money and love of pleasure which made the great dignitaries of the Church as bad as the wildest and fiercest of the nobles, or even worse. But jests and satires and comic assaults upon the priests in every way were common everywhere, and it was not necessary to be a heretic to take pleasure in them. The Estates in James's time were so very Catholic that they professed to fear the bad influence

upon his religious principles of his uncle, Henry VIII., should they be permitted to meet, and so late as the battle of Pinkie in 1547, the Scots called, 'Come on loons ! come on heretics !' to the Englishmen, much as they might have done had they been orthodox Spaniards instead of Scots ; so that it is evident the nation in general was not at that time largely influenced by the changes of belief.

Notwithstanding this, the doctrines of the Reformation had been spreading slowly in the bosom of the country without remark. One of Wycliffe's followers had been burned for heresy a long time before ; but this, though you may think it was in itself a remarkable event, was not taken much notice of by the nation, being the business of the Church more than that of the public. Heresy was then mixed up in the mind of the people with witchcraft and sorcery, in which the most enlightened believed. And you must know that it had not yet dawned upon anyone, either on one side or the other, that men had any right to believe, except as they were taught, or to worship God in any manner different from that appointed by the Church. The idea was (and it is an idea which can be defended by many arguments), that to believe and to teach others what is wrong was the worst of all offences, as bad, nay worse, than murder, as it was the destruction of the soul ; and that a heretic was in that sense the greatest enemy of mankind, and ought to be put out of the way of doing harm by the most urgent means. This, I suppose, was why burning was chosen for the punishment of heresy, that everything of them might perish, and nothing remain. But the Scots were not so much interested in the burning of John Reresby for

heresy as they were in the burning of Lady Glamis at a later period for witchcraft.

It startled Scotland, however, when Patrick Hamilton, a young man of good family, was burned at the stake in front of the college of St Salvator in St Andrews for having written a book which was against purgatory and masses for the dead and other doctrines which pressed practically upon the people, as well as about justification by faith and the greater spiritual truths which were not as yet so generally understood. That event took place in 1528, but it was not till 1543, fifteen years after, that the leaven of these new views beginning to work, showed itself in any open act. In the later year there occurred a riot in Dundee, in which several churches were destroyed, and other disturbances of the same kind took place in Edinburgh itself, specially directed against the great convent of the Blackfriars. In the latter case, however, the people of the locality turned out in defence of the monks, and drove away the unruly mob, which probably consisted of two or three people holding the new views, backed up by the 'roughs' as we call them nowadays, who always collect whenever mischief is going on. Things, however, became more serious when George Wishart, who was the first victim of any importance, appeared on the scene.

At this time, as I have told you, Cardinal Beaton was one of the first men in Scotland. He was the head of the French party, and so powerful, that Henry of England was ready to have done almost any villainy to get him into his power; and he was not beloved in Scotland, being indeed only safe in his strong castle at St Andrews, planted upon the rocks in that dangerous

bay, and well protected also on the land side, with his great cathedral and university and busy town. It was the opinion of the historians for a long time that when Wishart, coming fresh from Cambridge, a Don of St Benett's College there, and known for a good and learned man, was delivered into the Cardinal's hands and given over by him for execution, it was entirely for the sake of religion, and on the ground of heresy that he suffered; but there are now grave doubts that Wishart had really come to Scotland in consequence of a conspiracy to kill the Cardinal, and was more or less an emissary of the English in that matter, which lessens our sympathy with him. This, however, was not brought out at his trial; the judgment against him was for heresy alone, and the sentence carried out with the avowed intention of alarming and checking the heretics of Scotland, who were beginning to show as a distinct party in the state.

It is painful to think that this good man, whom I was taught to look upon as a martyr for the reformed faith, and who was certainly a good, pious and charitable person and full of real devotion to the truth, should have been involved in any murderous conspiracy. But then he was as fully convinced that the removal of Beaton was a necessity for religion, as Beaton was that his removal would be an advantage to the Church. There is a great difference, however, between dying because you have plotted the death of another man, and dying for the doctrine of justification by faith.

Notwithstanding this, the journey of Wishart through Scotland had been to a great degree like that of a travelling evangelist. He had met in the house of one of the lairds or gentlemen of Lothian, a certain

young man who was tutor to the boys of the family, though whether a priest or not there is no evidence to say. The name of this young man was John Knox; he was of more importance to Scotland than Wishart and Beaton and a score more all put together. He was a man of the keenest intellect, the most sharp temper and an impetuosity and force of character that carried all before them. He loved war in every way, constant fighting, preaching, writing; a man who could never be at rest. He had a boundless command of words and a sort of rude, overpowering eloquence, so that all his life through he either convinced men to his will, or silenced them when he could not convince them. He would fain have gone with Wishart upon his dangerous journey, but was sent back by him to 'his bairns,' the boys whose tutor he was. It is difficult to divine what kind of tutor he could have been, but his bairns seemed to have been attached to him, and we find him with them shortly after in St Andrews, the great seat of learning, where they probably went to attend the classes of Major, the great historian, or other famous professors, and where he took, as you shall see, a great part in the commotions that were to follow.

Probably the execution of Wishart, which took place on the 28th March, 1546 exasperated the party of which he had been the agent; but yet, so far as we know, they were only carrying out the purpose, which he had helped to concert, when a short time after, in May, there strolled into St Andrews, by twos and threes, a small party of gentlemen, who, in the same accidental way, got entrance into the castle where repairs were going on and workmen

about. Norman Leslie, the son of the Earl of Rothes, who belonged to Fife, and therefore could all the more readily get entrance into St Andrews, was the head of the party, with which was also young Kirkcaldy of Grange, afterwards one of the most famous soldiers of his time ; and others—sixteen men in all. That so small a party should be able to take possession of the castle, surprise and overcome its defenders in it and murder Beaton, hanging his body out of his own window, seems wonderful ; but they carried out their purpose rapidly before any suspicion was excited, and thus surprised the ancient city, in which there were many of their own way of thinking, and no garrison of importance to oppose them.

John Knox with his bairns had arrived in St Andrews at Easter, very shortly before. He was probably also aware that some such step was contemplated, and, at least, made no objection to the act ; but it was almost by force that he was made to assume the office of preacher in the Castle chapel, and pastor of these fierce spirits whom he did not spare in his vehement sermons, though he held by them faithfully to the end, and probably thought the deed they had done a perfectly justifiable one. Beaton's murderers were soon assailed in their stronghold, but held out for fourteen months, which seems almost incredible, considering that their number was never great. It required a French fleet of sixteen galleys and a determined siege to reduce the fortress, which, though so strong, must always have been a small place. In the end, the whole party, including Knox, were carried off to France. No one seems to have been executed for Beaton's murder, but they were confined there in various strong-

holds. We hear of the escape of the chief persons among them from Mont St Michel in Normandy. Knox, for his part, with several others, was made a galley slave, and actually toiled in that dreadful employment on one occasion in a French ship, which brought him within sight of those very rocks and breached walls of St Andrews, from which he had been brought, and to which, he prophetically assured his fellow-captives, he should soon return again.

For seven or eight years after this we do not hear much more about the progress of the Reformation in Scotland, until it suddenly appears in full development as the inspiration of the larger and worthier part of the population, including all ranks, from the great nobles to the burghers and yeomen. In the meanwhile the Queen-regent had made various attempts to strengthen her own position, but ineffectually. She had endeavoured to establish a small standing army, which might always be at the command of the sovereign, instead of the feudal vassals who were so little trustworthy, and were as likely now to fight against the crown as to be on its side ; but she was obliged to give up that attempt. She was, in fact, foiled in almost everything she tried to do, either by the opposition of the nobles, or by the action of the people, who declined to pay the new taxes levied by her—or by the English who had recommenced their attempts to get the command of Scotch affairs.

In the end of 1554 John Knox returned to Scotland, according to his prophecy ; but remained only a short time, during which he preached continually with a very great effect upon the mind of the country. He went everywhere—to the castles of the great nobles,

to the houses of the country gentlemen, and to all the great towns to preach. He even proposed to preach to the Queen-regent making no doubt that he would convert her, and was very angry when Mary took the proposal as a jest. In the course of his preachings, he was asked by some of the gentlemen who were his chief supporters to celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which was the greatest innovation which had yet been made. No doubt Knox employed the form of service used in Geneva, where, during some part of his absence from Scotland, he had officiated as pastor. This did much towards forming the scattered Protestants into a reformed church, with the strong bond, not only of faith, but of settled order and rites. Knox left Scotland for Geneva in the following year. When he returned finally in 1559 he found that his scattered hearers had grown into a great body of believers, of sufficient importance to assume a distinct name, that of the Congregation, the leaders of which had bound themselves to the defence of the faith by signing a document sometimes called the First Covenant, an example which, as you will see afterwards, was followed at the most important moments of subsequent history.

The Reformers were now becoming every day more ready to take up arms and form an independent national party, working indeed for the good of Scotland, but at first much more devoted to the increase and diffusion of the faith and the overthrow of the old Church, in which they could see no good and which was to them the accursed thing. The event which really hurried this separation and brought the Congregation into direct collision with the Queen-regent and her party, was a preaching 'raid' made by Knox into the north,

where he was accompanied by a number of gentlemen, now beginning to be called the Lords of the Congregation, who were in their turn attended by armed followers and retainers, such as constantly surrounded every great personage in those days. Knox preached in Perth in one of the great churches there, moving his hearers to much enthusiasm. But after he had himself left the church, an unfortunate accident attracted the attention of the still lingering hearers to the decorations of the altar, on which there were the usual religious images and symbols—crosses and images of saints—which they had been now taught to look upon as idolatrous and profane. Immediately a disgraceful riot arose, in which the church was despoiled and stripped, and a great deal of wanton damage done. A mob requires but a beginning to any work of destruction, and, wild with excitement and mischief, they rushed on to the great monasteries in the town, one of which, the Carthusian, was ‘the fairest abbaye’ of any in Scotland, full of splendid monuments. This, too, was furiously assaulted with, no doubt, some religious indignation against the ‘idolatry’ supposed to be practised there, but also a growing rage of plunder and destruction. This violent rioting in the name of religion, which has done more than anything else to prejudice the Scots Reformers in the eyes of posterity, was, you will see, the result of accident and not of design, and the worst and lowest elements in the crowd were thus able to precipitate the action and shape the proceedings of the leaders. The Dundee townsmen who had joined the gathering, who had already distinguished themselves in this bad way, and who were inspired by strong local rivalries, were the

first in the work of destruction. Thus the excitement of a rule mob, which meant nothing but mischief, gave a false air of barbarity to the beginning of a struggle which could not in any case have been avoided ; and there was henceforward war in Scotland, with, on the one side, the Queen and a certain portion of the nobility, the Catholic and French party ; and on the other, the Congregation with its Lords, the followers of the reformed faith, an eager crowd of preachers with Knox at their head and all the strength of English influence and support at its back.

You must remember that in the struggle that followed, this distinction always remained. The party of the Reformation was always supported by England, that of the old Church by France. France and England thus carried on another phase of their long quarrel through the convulsion and agony of the less strong but always determined little country which would be guided by neither. Nothing can be more curious than the busy background which is revealed to us by all the old papers and letters in the national records, both of England and Scotland. In the front of all things are the fiery preachings of Knox and his brethren, the consultations of the Lords of the Congregation, the excitement of the crowd, which hurried their leaders into much trouble by their unconsidered movements, with fierce uncharitableness on both sides, every Protestant thinking every Catholic a wicked idolator, and every Catholic thinking every Protestant a lawless infidel : but behind these ragings and confusions were Queen Elizabeth and her counsellors, constantly writing letters, giving advice and even money and

help, all with the view of their own interest : and the Court of France, on the other side, carrying on an endless agitation. The Lords of the Congregation were often not wise, but they were, many of them, really religious and good men, and had the good of their country in their thoughts. They desired the glory of God and the happiness of Scotland, if anyone did. Knox, who had become the most powerful man in the country, had often very noble aims ; but he had a very imperious, harsh temper, and was quite incapable of understanding how it was possible that anybody who disagreed with himself could be right. His *Historie of the Reformation in Scotland* is a wonderful book, though, perhaps, not very good for you young ones to read. It is full of the most picturesque scenes, and is as real and living as if you had been yourself present and seen everything ; but it is fierce and intolerant beyond description, and there is a great deal of coarse humour in it, which is truly Scotch, and often very laughable, but not pleasant. I doubt very much whether he could be said to be in any way a lovable man : but he was an extraordinarily strong one, and moulded the Scotch character, leaving his own imprint upon it as no one has been able to do since his day.

When the Congregation left Perth it had become an army, an army which grew like a snowball as it rolled along the country towards Edinburgh, its coming sometimes stimulating the people—‘the raskall multitude,’ as Knox called them (for he did not admire the mob whose sins were all laid on his shoulders) — to destroy and plunder whatever fine churches or rich monasteries lay in its way, some-

times helping the local crowd to repeat these atrocities. The course of the host was thus traced by burning and destruction everywhere, notwithstanding the pretension of being themselves the injured party which the Reformers set up. When they approached Edinburgh the Queen retired to Leith, which she had fortified and filled with a French garrison. But the Congregation itself was rather an undisciplined horde than a properly constituted army, and it was brought to a standstill when regular military operations had to be taken in hand. The attempt to besiege Leith came to nothing, the Dundee townsmen and other unruly bands, so strong in wrecking churches, being quite incapable for such work, and the Congregation had also to evacuate Edinburgh in much depression and despondency. They appealed in confusion and dismay for the help which had been promised them from England at this melancholy crisis. I suppose that the heat of religious conflict, which is the most desperate of all passions, had quenched in the minds of Knox and his party the old strong feeling in Scotland against the interference of England; at all events the Lords of the Congregation seem to have been very thankful of the aid of the English to help them out of a hopeless and difficult position.

But everything was again thrown out of joint by an unexpected event. The Queen-regent died in Edinburgh, 10th June 1560, in the flower of life, and amid every appearance of triumph and success. This occurrence brought both defence and attack to an end. Within a month of her death the English forces had been dismissed, carefully escorted to the

border and got rid of, and the French had taken to their ships : so that the Lords of the Congregation, taking possession of Edinburgh, and calling a parliament there to settle the affairs of the kingdom, had become the only authority in the land.

The parliament thus called was a remarkable one ; its chief business was to establish, not laws and regulations of common life, but the constitution of the new Church, and to consolidate and settle the revised tenets of Christian belief. The Confession of Faith, drawn up by Knox and his brethren, was discussed in this strange assembly, clause by clause, like a new code of laws, and passed by the legislators with only two or three dissentients. The bishops, and other great ecclesiastics, were all present, sitting as members of the assembly, but they sat silent, dumbfounded, and made no protest, while their power and greatness were abolished, and the performance of mass was made into an offence against the law. It was remarked exultingly that they had not a word to say for themselves, though the ministers were held in with difficulty as in a leash, eager to be at them, and answer the excuses which they did not make. And in this extraordinary and complete way the Reformation of Scotland was accomplished : the old Church disappeared, and the new faith and system of ecclesiastical government reigned in its stead. It was asserted afterwards that this parliament of 1560, being held without any representative of the sovereign, or so much as the exhibition of the insignia of royalty, was no parliament at all ; but it was a very effective session indeed in respect to the work it performed. Only in the matter of the ecclesiastical property, which thus

fell into the hands of the Estates, was John Knox and his party disappointed. He had hoped to appropriate them, in the first place, to the maintenance of the National Reformed Church, and afterwards to education and the uses of charity. The Lords of the Congregation, however, considered this, as the witty Secretary Lethington said, as a 'devout imagination,' and held it better to distribute the greater part of the Church lands among themselves, as had been done in England, for their example, a short time before.

CHAPTER XIV

MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS

It is very seldom that a revolution is so complete as that which now took place in Scotland, and above all in Edinburgh, which by this time had become very completely the centre of national life. In the course of a very few years, from 1555 to 1560, the city certainly, and to a great degree the country, would seem to have changed their aspect altogether ; the worship of the old Church, with all its magnificent ritual, having become not only hateful but under the ban of the law, and the new reformed preachers, though few in number and sometimes poorly endowed except with religious fervour and a sort of rude eloquence, having become the only recognised teachers. The genius and extraordinary power of Knox seem to have been the chief cause of this sudden revolution, which was almost too rapid to be the growth of conviction. But perhaps the change was not so thorough as appears on the surface, nor the new government so universally obeyed : for we soon hear of a tremendous commotion in Edinburgh, the populace almost in arms against the authorities because of a 'Robin Hood' procession, some rough merrymaking of the time, which dis-

pleased the grave rulers of the place. The provost and bailies condemned one of the ringleaders to death, and the townsfolk rose against the sentence, 'dang down' the gibbet and set the victim free. To hang a man for taking part in one of those rude, popular diversions was a severe proceeding, and proves that there was some truth in the accusation that the Reformers wished to banish mirth and amusement, and everything more lively than the preachings from the national life.

The progress of affairs was now again arrested by an unforeseen event. Francis II. of France died at a very early age, and Mary, Queen of Scotland, his wife, was thus set free to return to her native country. The Reformers, who had attained their supreme position almost without resistance, were suddenly made to pause in their triumphant career when the Queen came home. After the first flush of success things had not, perhaps, gone so smoothly with them; they were not quite at peace among themselves, especially since dissensions had arisen concerning the property of the Church, and the question whether or not the lords were to retain those lands which had been granted to them in the late reigns, under various pretexts as commendators, lay bishops, priors, etc., according to the custom of the time. Knox insisted most justly that the property of the Church should still provide for the instruction of the people, and the support of the ministers of religion, though these ministers were so completely changed; but this the Lords, whose personal interests were concerned, did not see at all.

Matters were thus already a little disturbed in the

bosom of the party when Queen Mary came home. You have all heard of Mary, as everyone must who knows anything whatever of history. She is one of the most romantic and remarkable figures in all our records, the representative of three, at least, of the greatest races that have ever held sway in the world:—the house of Stewart, with all its energy and valour and gaiety and misfortune; the house of Tudor, with its tremendous force, selfishness and passion; the house of Guise, with its craft and subtlety and far-reaching aims: such a combination has seldom been seen. Mary was a widow at eighteen, but her husband, Francis II. of France, had been of no particular importance to her, and she was not at all a dejected mourner, but full of life, loving pleasure and splendour and all delights, strangely different from the men who thought the wild jester of a popular merrymaking worthy of death.

You all know, besides, that Mary was the most beautiful woman of her time, which I suppose means that she was the most charming woman of her time, delightful to talk to, as well as to behold, with a smile and a look which would, as people say in Scotland, ‘wile the bird from the tree.’ The Scots nobility and the common people, from the moment she appeared, fell at the feet of this lovely young woman, so frank, so gay, so gracious, so ready to be pleased. She turned the head of the country, for a time, as throughout all her life she continued to turn the heads of individuals. Only the solid, steady mass of the Congregation—the middle-class, upon which Knox had stamped his image, and the grim and anxious Lords, who feared to see all their work overthrown

and their plans overturned, resisted her influence ; and even among them, there were many waverers at first.

One of the greatest men of the time, who now came into much prominence, was the half-brother of Mary, the Lord James, as he was then called, but afterwards the Earl of Murray—a man whose character has been much debated, the partisans of Mary having no good word to say for him. If, however, he had been the legitimate son of James V. and succeeded to the crown, we should probably have had the greatest of the James Stewarts upon the Scots throne at this great emergency. Unfortunately, not only was this not the case, but Murray was in a false position all his life, suspected by one party or other whatever he did, though acknowledged by both as an able and a good man. He was a faithful brother to Mary during the first part of her career; but his heart was with the Reformers, although he did everything that was possible to keep peace between the two parties, and to defend his sister from the consequences of many mistakes which she naturally made. These were perfectly natural mistakes. In France, the court cared nothing at all what the people thought, and Mary had not the least idea that in Scotland things were different, and that it was there the business of the Queen to please the people rather than to expect that they should please her : and how the mass celebrated in her private chapel should be almost sufficient reason for a rebellion against her authority, was what she could not understand. She does not seem, however, to have made any attempt to restore, generally, the old Church or its ritual, though she extended her protection to the country priests and others whenever

it was possible, and held steadily to her own form of faith, as she had every right to do.

I think the beginning of Mary's reign, though it sowed the seeds of so much dreadful evil, was in itself a bright spot in history. She held wonderful conversations now and then with Knox, which I do not for my part, think at all so dreadful as many people have thought. I feel sure that Mary was much amused by him at first, and that he had to stand very firm, to 'sit tight,' as horsemen say, in order not to be dazzled by her delightful ways. But all that changed in a very short time, and they came to hate each other, though the man more than the woman, the Reformer always more bitter than the Queen.

At the same time, there went on, underneath the splendour and the joy of Mary's arrival, a great deal of discussion which did not tend towards peace. The great question of the ecclesiastical revenues, whether they were to be devoted to the uses of the new Church and the education of the people, as Knox desired, or to remain in secular hands as, naturally, the immediate possessors of them preferred, was debated on every hand. I can scarcely enter into a description of the manner in which these Church lands had come already, without any direct confiscation, into the hands of laymen. It was according to a system practised all over Europe, by which the nobles acquired the external rights of these great properties, on condition of defending them from outward assaults; and even were called lay abbots, priors and so forth, giving a certain portion of the revenues to maintain the offices of the Church. In England, to the present day, there are many lay rectors to whom the tithes of a parish

belong under certain conditions, so that it is their business to keep the chancels of the churches in repair, and other duties of a similar kind. You may easily suppose that the Commendator of a wealthy abbey would stand to his rights, and hesitate to give up his income to be divided into stipends for the preachers and schoolmasters, whether he were Catholic or Protestant.

On the other hand, there awoke behind Mary the whole subdued clamour of the English letters and negotiations, such as had been carried on with the Lords of the Congregation before, and, indeed, had run through everything in Scotland, a subdued, yet continual murmur of correspondence for many years. Queen Elizabeth, by this time firmly established, but always suspicious, was well aware that of all the dangers to her throne, it was Mary of Scotland that was the greatest, notwithstanding the more apparent terrors of Spanish Armadas and insurrections at home. Elizabeth was, according to the Church of Rome, and by the strict letter of the law, illegitimate, and Mary Stewart was the lawful heir of England, in right of her grandmother, Margaret Tudor. This was to both parties as plain as daylight. Mary believed it firmly, and bided her time; and so did the whole Catholic world, always believing that a moment would come when the Reformation and all its ways would be abjured by the people, and what they believed to be the true Church and the rightful heir would be acknowledged. That moment never came. But there are many in the Church of Rome, and, I believe, among them the present Pope himself, Leo XIII., a good and remarkable man, who believe it still.

All these things, however, were for the moment thrown into the shade by the pressing necessity of choosing a husband for Mary. The dreadful chapters of her personal history which succeeded that choice, and which have made this portion of the history of Scotland into a tragedy, so dramatic and striking, so piteous and appalling, that the reader does not know how to think of anything else while it occupies the foreground, have reduced the earlier period of her life almost into insignificance; but it lasted for four years, years without any fatal signs. It seems now a kind of madness to have chosen for the husband of such a woman as Mary, so clever, so witty and so versatile as she was, without taking into consideration any more serious qualities, a young fool and fop like Darnley, who was indeed of a noble house, and had the blood royal in his veins, as good as her own, but who was in himself nobody, a foolish boy, of no account at all. It is said, however, that though he had many recommendations in his favour, none of these were the cause of the marriage, but simply the fact that she fell in love with him, which settled the question summarily. But if she fell in love with Darnley, she soon repented of that folly. He was Henry Stewart, Earl of Darnley, the son of the Duke of Lennox and of Margaret Douglas, the daughter of Margaret Tudor, by her second marriage with Angus, so that he was cousin both to Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth, and after Mary, the next heir to the English crown. Mary had thought the match beneath her when it was first proposed to her, though the young man was recognised in England as the first prince of the blood royal; but when she saw the handsome lad, she changed her

mind. It must be remembered that she was herself young, and accustomed to indulge every caprice.

When the marriage was made at last, on the 29th July 1565, though it was popular in the country, there was great dissatisfaction among the more important persons of the realm. The English ambassador and the Scots Congregation both protested against the step, though to tell the truth, none of the more important candidates for Mary's hand had found favour in the eyes of any party, though all were united in the opinion that married she must be. Murray, her brother, was so much dissatisfied, that after an effort to seize Darnley and prevent it, he attempted a short-lived insurrection against the newly-married pair, and was thus incapacitated from coming to her help when she wanted him most. It was not long before Mary was as much dissatisfied as her former counsellors. Darnley proved not only an inferior man but a bad husband, and his brilliant queen found herself 'sprighted with a fool,' and a jealous and suspicious one. Yet other circumstances were still, on the whole, favourable to her. Murray was banished, and hung about uneasily on the border with the other nobles who followed him, but Mary's own popularity and personal gifts procured her an increasing influence. It was not a noble part which these rebellious lords, though chiefly religious men and bearing a high reputation, played. They kept up a correspondence with both France and England, and hoped for aid, both in men and money, from Elizabeth to make mischief in their native country. But they were not strong enough in their own persons to make war with their sovereign, who, in buoyant energy and courage, full of great plans and hoping for no less than a

successful movement of all the Catholic powers, which should place herself upon the throne of England—was moving about Scotland, calling out her feudal forces here and there, now at Stirling, now at Glasgow, making a great show of authority and power—and though she did not persecute the Reformers, so discouraging them, that their services began to be deserted, and the old Church regained its lost place day by day. The rebellious lords were more easily defied at a distance than close at hand ; even Knox was overcome, and disappeared from Edinburgh ; and Mary, gay and triumphant, delighted with the activity and energy of her life, and wishing only that she were a man to wear a sword by her side and camp out in the summer fields, seemed, for a moment, to be about to carry the day. While she went on thus in radiance of success, her enemies melting away before her, a great Catholic revival had occurred on the Continent, and she was in the midst of a great correspondence, holding, or seeming to hold, the threads of an imperial plot and world-wide triumph in her hands.

The little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, had, however, appeared upon her sky. There was among Mary's personal attendants a certain Italian, her secretary, David Rizzio by name, who was very much in her confidence, conducting her correspondence with her French and Spanish allies, and no doubt deeply acquainted with all the plots and schemes that were going on. A foreign servant of this kind is always hated, and many of the Scots lords had, or supposed themselves to have, good reason to detest Rizzio, chief among these being Darnley himself, who found that he was shut out from his wife's presence during many

private conferences and consultations which Rizzio shared, and that, even in her moments of relaxation, Mary sometimes preferred her secretary's company to his. Darnley had made use of Rizzio's services to further his courtship, and he had never been a devoted husband: but neither of these things preserved him from a fit of furious jealousy against the foreign 'minion,' who was his wife's chief servant, and always with her. In those days, from hatred to murder was but a step. It was the familiar fate of a favourite at court, and always had been so, to perish by the hands of the surrounding courtiers or nobles who could not tolerate his preferment. The history of Scotland, as you will remember, is full of precedents to justify such a murder. One night, accordingly, when Mary, then in delicate health, but full of business, her time and her mind running over with even more than the affairs of the kingdom—with all the great European business in which her uncles of Guise were so deeply involved, and in which she herself was expected to be so important an agent—was seated at supper in Holyrood, in a tiny little room where we should scarcely think there was space to turn round, a terrible scene occurred. Notwithstanding the small size of the room, a number of people seem to have been present, among them the Queen's step-sister, the Countess of Argyle, Rizzio and two or three others. They had supped, though whether Mary took her meal alone with her sister while the others talked to amuse them, and served at the table, or if ceremony was waived on the occasion, we are not informed. To this little party, amid the lively conversation which Mary loved, Darnley suddenly appeared asking for admission,

which could not be denied the Queen's husband, and entering by a private staircase and door which no one but he had the right to use. His appearance, very possibly, checked the lively talk in which he was not able to bear any part, though, for a dreadful moment, he attempted to enter into it, and made some clumsy demonstration of affection for the queen. No suspicion seems at first to have entered the minds of the little party, though Rizzio had been seriously warned of danger awaiting him. But soon a grim spectre, Lord Ruthven, pale with sickness, burst in, with other conspirators behind him, by Darnley's private door, and seized the unfortunate secretary, who, distracted with sudden terror, tried to shelter himself behind the Queen. Mary, always dauntless, would have protected him with her own person, had not Darnley pulled her aside : and Rizzio was seized and flung into the outer room, now full of his enemies, who fell upon him with their daggers, and killed him within Mary's hearing, if not within her sight. It had been intended to give him a trial and condemn him by law, but when once he was within their reach, the conspirators could not wait.

This dreadful outrage was the end of the first chapter of Mary's life, in which she had been comparatively happy, very active, brave and energetic, a young monarch who might, as people say, have done anything, for good or for evil, with all the elements of power and success in her life. After this point, her private life eclipses the public part ; her individual history takes possession of the scene, and she plunges into the terrible incidents of a tragedy such as was never put upon any stage. The pardon of the

banished lords had been secured before, but it was noted that they appeared in Edinburgh only on the next day after this terrible event. They had all, even the noble Murray, been aware of what was to be done, and had bought their own recall, which had been procured by Darnley, by their consent to his plot. It is said that even Knox was an accomplice in this murder; at all events, he completely approved of it, and said so boldly. To all of them, patriots, noblemen and religious teachers, as well as the angry and envious peers and the foolish husband, it was a deed as little guilty to slay David as to clear off any other vermin from their path.

Rizzio's murder took place in the spring of 1566; a few months later, in July of that year, Mary's son was born. Her proceedings, in the meantime, had been remarkable. She escaped from Holyrood a few days after Rizzio's murder, and took refuge in the castle of Dunbar, held by Lord Seton, one of her warmest partisans. (If any of you have read *The Abbot*, which I advise you to do, you will remember that he was the father of Catherine Seton who appears there.) The Earl of Bothwell, whose name afterwards was so fatally associated with hers, along with her stepbrother-in-law, the Earl of Argyle, had been in Holyrood at the time of the murder: they hurriedly left it the same evening, and collected an army with which they joined her in Dunbar, as soon as she reached that strong place, so that the Queen was at once able to meet the rebel lords and all who were concerned in the murder, with power and authority. Many of them fled, those who were most guilty; but the greater leaders remained in Scotland, confident, perhaps, that their guilt

could not be proved ; nor did the Queen attempt to prove it. Ruthven, Morton and the others who had been personally engaged, fled to England, and thus put themselves out of her power ; but there remained the head and front of the offending—the worthless Darnley, whom Mary had condescended to flatter back into subjection, but whom she had not forgiven. He was nominally the first among the murderers, but probably had been quite as much the tool as the head of the conspiracy. Mary treated her foolish husband artfully, bringing him back by a few caresses, until she had succeeded in freeing herself from coercion : and he proved himself quite ready for any treachery, turning against the very men he had employed, and following in her train wherever she chose to lead. She kept him thus in hand until her child was born, and she was able in renewed strength and courage to carry out her own purposes. Then she allowed it to be seen how she loathed the man to whom she was bound. Nobody loved him, or had a good word to say for him. The men with whom he had conspired, and whom he had abandoned, hated him worst of all. The lords whom he had helped to bring back, but who were not sure for a moment that he might not betray them in their turn, despised yet feared him. He was no object even for pity, though a man who is the victim of a dreadful fate is, at least, sure of securing that, as soon as it is evident that the awful shadow is creeping over him in his turn.

The event which followed continues to this day one of those historical questions which are as warmly debated hundreds of years after as they were at the time. There are many people still who are almost ready to

go to the stake for it that Mary was innocent of any share in the death of her husband ; but those who believe so, surely forget the power of Mary's character and of her intellect, and must represent her to themselves as a gentle and amiable woman, with a woman's conventional faults, but neither the force nor the inclination to take any bold step, or to be moved by any strong passion. Sir Walter Scott was one of Mary's champions in his day, and no one has given us so delightful a picture of her ; but I do not think he believed her free from that dreadful stain. However that may be, and there are many incidents between, which I must pass over, it is certain that Darnley, who had been very ill, was escorted back to Edinburgh by Mary, hardly in a state of convalescence, in the end of January 1567, less than a year after Rizzio's death. It was intended to lodge him in Craigmillar Castle, probably for the sake of country air, while Mary proceeded to Edinburgh ; but this was changed at the last moment and he was lodged, very likely on the same pretence, in a house close to the city wall, called the Kirk o' Field. A few nights after, on the 9th February, this house was blown up, and Darnley perished in its ruins. This is the fact, and that the servants of Bothwell were the immediate instruments of the deed ; but nothing more is absolutely known.

This event filled the country with the wildest consternation ; the news of it flew like wildfire, and I do not think that anyone at the time believed Mary to be innocent. She was thought by many to be quite justified in the act, but not to be free of responsibility for it. Again, however, all the greatest nobles in Scotland, and Murray among the rest, were involved

in the guilt. Their defenders say, both of Mary and her brother, that they had believed the plot about which they had been consulted, and which was certainly for the removal of Darnley, to concern a divorce merely ; but that does not seem to be very credible. It is certain, however, that Mary's conduct was in every way calculated to make her appear guilty. For some time back, indeed before the murder of Rizzio, Bothwell had attained a great place in her councils. He is said to have been an ugly and ungraceful man, of rough manners and scanty education. But it is very unlikely that the last could be true, and Mary was no longer a light-hearted girl to be moved by a handsome face, as she had been in the case of Darnley. He was without doubt a brave man and devoted to her ; and he was a strong man, shrinking from no risk, daring and dauntless as herself. Already he had come to her aid in her trouble, and furnished her with the means of triumphing over her enemies. There is a famous letter addressed to him, called the Glasgow letter, and professedly found in a casket belonging to her, which, if it is true, makes it certain that she loved him with all the force of her nature. But then the question arises, Is it true, or a cruel forgery ? This cannot now be proved on either side.

But the facts of the story are these. In the terrible time of agitation and trouble that followed the murder of Darnley, when the whole country was full of a universal cry against those who did the deed, and the Queen was everywhere suspected of it, Bothwell, about whose guilt there could be no doubt, assumed, with her consent, the management of public affairs : and instead of being called to account for his share in

the crime, became Governor of Scotland and Mary's constant companion. A short time after they went together with the rest of the court to Seton, where the new-made widow and the suspected assassin 'passed their time merrily' in many sports and pastimes. Nor did Mary ever separate from him, until in May of the same year, 1567, her husband having been killed in February, she finally married Bothwell. She had been before this carried off by him to Dunbar with apparent violence, intended, as some historians think, to give her an excuse for the marriage, as if she had been under coercion and could not help herself; while some believe that she was actually carried away against her will, and had no resource but to marry him. Thus the story is involved and uncertain in every step. In the meantime, Bothwell, who was himself a married man, had been divorced from his wife to make this marriage possible.

The pair, who had formed under such fatal circumstances a marriage which was in itself an outrage on humanity, and who were forsaken by almost every friend worth retaining, remained for a very short time in Edinburgh. They then proceeded with a haste which almost seemed like flight to Borthwick Castle: then to Dunbar, where Bothwell gathered an army of broken men and vassals of his own around him, a band quite unfit to meet the soldiers whom the nobles were raising against him and his Queen, an army formed of the best troops in Scotland. It was still only June when the two parties met in what is called the battle of Carberry Hill, though it was no battle: for Bothwell was soldier enough to know that his force could not stand for a moment against that on the other side;

and the dreadful business was ended by Mary, who gave herself up into the hands of the Lords on condition that her husband should go free. They carried her to Edinburgh in the most tragic triumph, a disgraced and frantic woman, given up by all her friends, without even a woman to attend her or comfort her, without change of dress, and for the moment without hope or the most distant appearance of any possible delivery out of her trouble.

This was practically the end of Mary's reign. She was taken to Loch Leven Castle, an old stronghold planted on a small island in the middle of the lake, on the borders of Fife and Kinross, and not far from Falkland, where she had often held her court. She was kept in strict confinement there, and forced to abdicate in favour of her infant son; but in May of the next year she escaped and gathered around her—her old friends having by this time turned back to their allegiance, some in remorseful pity for a princess so unfortunate, and some with the spell of her old fascination regaining its power—a large and imposing party, enough, they all hoped, to turn the tide of fortune. But this was not the case. Her army was defeated disastrously at Langside by Murray and his stronger forces, and Mary in despair, determined, at least, not to fall into the hands of her own subjects, after a desperate ride across country, on the 13th May 1568, fled into England, where, only after a long interval, and many years of imprisonment, her fate was accomplished. The most life-like description of all these events, and of herself in her still undiminished beauty and wit and charm, you will find in Scott's *Abbot*, one of the most delightful books that was ever written.

CHAPTER XV

JAMES VI

THE Earl of Murray seems to have become the Regent or Governor of Scotland almost necessarily, as if it had been his right, after Mary's nominal abdication at Loch Leven. He was the ablest man of his party, and one whom all respected, though his career had not been up to this time so free of evil as his general character would have led the reader to expect. He was privy, according to all appearance, to the murder both of Rizzio and Darnley, and yet he was an honourable, and, in his way, a patriotic man, much concerned for the good of the country and of the Reformed Church, if not so careful of the means by which he tried to secure it. There are, however, people in this world whose acts are viewed leniently, however imperfect they may be, and there are others who are constantly regarded in an unfavourable light. We cannot account for this in many cases, but we are obliged to allow that it is a fact. 'One man,' says an old proverb, 'may steal a horse, while another may not look over the wall.' Murray was one of those who steal the horse un-reproved, while Mary, with all her attractions, might

not even approach the paddock. There was nothing she could do in which people did not suspect a concealed motive, perhaps not bad, yet not that which was declared—whereas he was always credited with, on the whole, a large and noble aim.

Scotland, torn asunder by conflicting parties and passions, calmed down under Murray's sway, and he was able to subdue various risings on the ever agitated borders and in the north, and to give the troubled country the sensation of a strong authority at the head of affairs, which kept men in control even without a blow struck.

The Church of Scotland was fully confirmed and established during the regency of Murray, more or less in the form in which it exists now, the Roman Catholic worship being abolished and also the Episcopal form of church government, though the principle of Episcopacy was more or less retained for a time in the office of the Superintendents, each of whom had a certain district allotted to him, and a certain number of ministers placed under him, and fulfilled in some degree the functions of a bishop, though under a vulgarised form and name. But this office was not long retained, and the Presbyterian order, in which all the ministers are equal, and the Church is governed by authorities within itself—that is by a number of ecclesiastical courts, one above another, the session of the parish, the presbytery of the county or district, the synod of the province, and the General Assembly of the whole nation—has ever since been the Church economy of Scotland. These courts were never exclusively composed of clergymen, for every congregation had a number of lay officers

called elders, who were separated to the service of the Church by a sort of ordination, or lesser orders, which without in the least withdrawing them from their secular occupations, or making them part of the clergy, yet gave them a certain limited right to teach, and a special faculty to rule—ruling elder being indeed their official title. A second and lower order of Church officials called deacons have existed occasionally, now falling into disuse, now rising into popularity, whose business it was to look after the secular affairs and money matters of the Church: but these have never held the permanent place which belongs to the elders. In the parish session, which had no equivalent in the Church of England, the lay element was the greatest, since there were several elders but only one minister. In the other courts, superior to this, the proportion was more equal, and the ministers, as the more educated and probably more gifted members, besides holding a higher office, held generally the chief influence.

That you may understand further the constitution of this Church, which was much more fundamentally 'reformed' in the way of being altered and made new than any other national church except that of Geneva, I must tell you that, since the Reformation, religious instruction has been held in Scotland the chief function of the Church. In the Church of Rome the mass and the other sacraments are her chief occupation, the mass being, as many of you will know, not only a remembrance of the great sacrifice of our Saviour, but professedly a repetition of it, so that Jesus Christ is crucified daily, and his real body and blood over again offered to God for his people. In the Church

of England this same theory has always existed more or less, though not recognised in her articles of faith, and strongly opposed by a portion of the Church : but it may be said that prayer has always been the great individual feature in her services—common prayer, that is the praying of the body of people all together, each worshipper having his part, in the form of audible response, as well as the officiating priest. This method of worship was taken from the original Church of Rome, but has been so extended in England as to form the chief peculiarity of the services of the Church of England. In the Roman mass the priest offers his sacrifice for the people while they remain devout spectators, following rather than joining in the service. In the Scotch Church the minister offers prayers for the people, which they also devoutly follow in silence, joining only so far as it is possible for a number of different minds to join in the personal utterance of one. In the English Church the principle is that all pray, responding and taking their part in the service, so that it is performed by all, and not by one for all. The difference is great and very clearly marked.

It is only with the two latter methods that we have anything to do ; there are a number of people on either side who so warmly prefer one as to condemn the other—but it is, I think, a great misfortune when we do that, though we are all perfectly justified in being attached to our own. The Scots could never tolerate responses ; I cannot in the least tell you why, nor, I believe could anyone else. John Knox and his brethren began by using the book of Common Prayer, prepared under Edward VI. in England, which Knox

is believed to have had some share in arranging. But they soon changed from that to the Genevan prayer book, which, under the title of the Book of Common Order, was substituted for the other during the regency of Murray. This book is now called John Knox's Liturgy, though I cannot tell you why, nor when it was that this was also dropped, and the custom of extempore or, at least, of individual prayer, was adopted. But it has very long been the ideal of the Scotch Church that preaching was the chief aim of public worship, the prayers being rather preliminaries, a sort of devout framework for the instruction.

This was one thing which Murray secured in the first year of his regency. All these dreadful events had taken place within a very short time. From the murder of Darnley, in February 1567, till Mary's flight into England only about fifteen months had passed, during which the Church had gone through various vicissitudes as well as the State. When Mary's influence was high, the nation turned back in some degree towards the old faith, and the priests who were scattered over the country came forth again and said their masses wherever they dared. There was even a time during which Knox himself had to escape from Edinburgh, and everything languished in the congregation. But now all that was over—the mass was once more abolished, and the government and economy of the Reformed Church established. There was only one thing which remained unsecured, and that was the ecclesiastical revenues, the property of the old Church, which had in a great measure been appropriated by lay proprietors, most unwilling to give up an acre—and the tiends or tithes which it was still more difficult to

wrest out of secular hands. Even Murray, zealous as he was, could not alter human nature in this respect. The ministers would have accepted willingly what was called the thirds, a third part of the entire Church revenues, which was little more than Mary herself had proposed to grant to them ; but not even this would the Estates consent to, and we hear, incidentally, that the churches which the mob had made into partial ruins all over the country had to be used in their ruinous state, there being no funds to restore them, while the Reformed preachers could scarcely find bread for their families, which was a poor reward for all the hard work they had done. Even Murray could not set affairs on a proper basis here.

For the rest, his life was swept into the conflict which arose over Mary, now under the power of Elizabeth, and which was conducted through constant intrigues, and by a mass of correspondence and negotiations, which remind one of what St John says, that the whole world would not contain the books that should be written were all set down. The interference of England with Scotch affairs had never slackened through all these years. It had been accompanied with much violence under Henry VIII., as I have told you, which Elizabeth did not attempt to follow ; but she was as eager to interfere, to guide and to influence, as England had always been—and as the power of the French party had greatly increased under Mary, the efforts of the English had been strengthened in proportion. When Elizabeth found her cousin, her rival, her probable supplanter, in her hands, and fully within her power, it is natural that she should have quickened every effort to obtain full

sway over the obstinate northern kingdom. It must be added that Mary was the most dangerous rival and opponent of the English queen. Half the world or more considered Elizabeth illegitimate, and Mary the rightful heir. When Elizabeth came to the English throne, Mary, then in France, had adopted the arms and title of Queen of England as well as Scotland, a mere brag, indeed, but a most uncomfortable one, and full of meaning, which might at any moment have become disastrous, and a constant threat held over her cousin's head.

On the other hand, Elizabeth held very strongly the principle of the divine right of kings, and could not, or pretended that she could not, tolerate the measures which had driven another princess from her throne. As the fruit of the endless correspondence of which I have told you, a conference was held in York in October 1568, which was more or less an informal trial of Mary for the murder of Darnley. Murray and a great number of the Scots lords were present, and they brought with them the famous casket already referred to, which Bothwell had left behind him in his flight, and which contained several letters, believed to have been written to him by Mary, which, if true, left little doubt of her guilt. The Englishmen who examined them would seem to have had no doubt of it, but the representatives of Mary disowned them in the strongest terms, as did she herself vehemently by letter. They were never submitted to her personal inspection, nor was she ever confronted with her accusers, facts which made these proceedings useless in every legal point of view, and the conference broke up without any conclusion.

This business, however, occupies the entire foreground of Scottish history during the year 1568. Behind this curious, tumultuous, busy scene, in which we see Elizabeth surrounded by all her anxious lords, holding the strings of a hundred intrigues in her hand, using all the forces of her remarkable intellect, now wisely and powerfully, now with an apparent hesitation and frivolity which appear weakness, but which in reality were but another form of strength—Scotland went on quietly enough, relieved at least by the absence of any conflict within herself. The only disturbing influence within her own bosom was the unquietness of the faction of the Hamiltons, who were the next heirs to the crown of Scotland after Mary and her son, but who were always an undecided and foolish family, letting ‘I dare not wait upon I would,’ afraid of committing themselves, and yet very anxious to make mischief and turn the troubles of the country to their own advantage. They had resisted and embarrassed Murray throughout his regency, sometimes calling themselves the Queen’s party, sometimes attempting to form a party of their own as next in succession to the throne.

In the course of this struggle one of the race, Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh, sustained, or fancied himself to sustain, some special injury at the hands of Murray. His wife, it was long asserted, had been outraged, and his house destroyed by one of Murray’s retainers; but this story seems to be quite without proof. At all events, he considered himself to have been specially wronged. His personal vengeance, if not authorised, was at least not discountenanced by his party, and his intention must have been known among

them, as is proved by the fact that Murray's death was looked for and calculated upon in various quarters. An occasion presented itself while the regent was passing through Linlithgow, where Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh had a house. After every precaution had been taken to secure a safe escape, this man posted himself on the balcony of his house, by which Murray's procession passed, and shot the Regent in the midst of his followers. It was so suddenly done, and the bullet took such immediate effect, that the startled crowd suffered the murderer to escape: and thus a wise government came to an end, and a man who might have done much for Scotland was taken away in a moment from the country which stood in so much need of him and of all good men.

This happened on the 23d January 1570, two years and some months after Murray had assumed the regency, so that this capable and powerful ruler had very little time to show what he could have done. He was succeeded by Lennox, the father of Darnley, who, however, lost his life in 1571 in an assault upon Stirling, made by the Queen's party with the hope of getting possession of the child James VI. The Earl of Mar followed in this dangerous office, and died in little more than a year. Such was the great expenditure of life and of her leaders with which Scotland struggled through this time of conflict and uncertainty. Murray's death let loose again all the forces which he had kept in check; there were raids on the border, there were parliaments and counter parliaments, one held in the King's name, the other in the Queen's; and something very like civil war raged throughout the country.

Amid all these dreadful scenes it will amuse you to hear a little story of the baby king, in which there is one of those sayings which children sometimes bring forth in innocence, but which seem full of meaning to the spectators. The little sovereign was brought into the Parliament House in Stirling, from the castle, which was his home, and placed at the table to preside over the assembly. He was five years old, a delicate but clever child. The table at which he was placed was covered with a cloth, in which this little observer, more quick to discern such trifles than to understand the discussions going on around him, soon found out a hole, into which he managed to thrust his small finger. He asked presently what was the name of the place into which he had been brought, and was told the Parliament House. 'Then,' said little James, who, you must know, was called in his later days the British Solomon, 'this parliament has a hole in it.' 'Whether God inspired the babe with prophecy or not, I will not dispute,' says the historian ; but it was within a few days after that Lennox, the king's grandfather, the regent of the moment, was shot in the attack of the Queen's party upon Stirling. Lennox, who was more an Englishman than a Scot, was in reality the nominee of Queen Elizabeth, and entirely devoted to her interests. The parliament which had been assembled to deliberate under his guidance was chiefly occupied in choosing his successor.

In the time of the Regent Mar, the state of Scotland was nothing less than that of a country torn in two by civil war. The party which held for the Queen was under the guidance of able leaders,

and consequently more powerful than it had yet been. In so short a narrative as this, I cannot tell you of all the notable people, nor of half the picturesque incidents which make the history of the time so remarkable. And this is how it happens that I have not yet mentioned Maitland of Lethington, almost always called Lethington, who was what we should call Secretary of State to Queen Mary, and though he failed in his allegiance now and then, was yet more faithful to her than many of her champions. He had been involved more or less in everything that had happened during her reign, and though he was with Murray during the examination into her guilt at York, and thus against her, yet he was also for her, with an anxious desire to protect her from danger, and even to restore her to her throne, though he probably had little doubt as to her guilt. Now that Murray's reign was over, and the English interest paramount, he had come back to his former allegiance, and though a worn-out and suffering man, was now in Edinburgh Castle, the headquarters of her party, using all his talents and genius to maintain her cause. Kirkcaldy of Grange, governor of the castle, one of the last of the knights of romance whom we hear of in history, was the practical leader, while Lethington was the inspiration of the Queen's defenders. Grange was a gallant soldier, trained in the ranks of the champions of the Reformation, a friend of Knox, and, in his youth, as you may recollect, a member of that desperate little band which killed Cardinal Beaton, and held the castle of St Andrews against all-comers. It was to him that Mary surrendered at Carberry Hill. And it would appear that though he did not immedi-

ately adopt her cause, he had from that time fallen under the fascination which she exercised over so many men who were brought into personal contact with her. He became her champion, however, only from the moment when her cause was hopeless, and now held in her name that invincible Castle of Edinburgh, the greatest stronghold in Scotland, and the most important. These two men were enough to give strength and importance even to the vague and uncertain Hamiltons, and lent to the intermittent resistance, which had harassed Murray, all the importance of a civil war. I can only give you the briefest account of all these things, but there are many books in which you may find more about them, besides the recognised histories. A very able writer, Mr John Skelton, has written a life of Lethington, which is as interesting as any story-book : but, alas ! we have no longer Scott to make us see, as in a glass, the wonderful confusions and combinations of the time.

The next regent was the Earl of Morton, the last of those great Douglasses, who had been of so much account in Scotch history; but he was not a noble representative of that race. He was a strong and brave, but also a very unscrupulous man, with a thirst for wealth beyond even the usual rapacity of the time, in which property was always changing hands. One of the first acts of his government was to deliver up the Duke of Northumberland, who had taken refuge in Scotland after his rebellion against Elizabeth; a rebellion inspired by Mary, and made in her cause. Morton sold this gentleman to England for money, or, at least, received money immediately after his surrender,

to the scorn and shame of Scotland; and his regency throughout was full of exactions. But, at the same time, he exercised a firm sway, and gradually brought the people into a state of quiet and peace. This was not accomplished, however, until, by the aid of troops sent from England, Edinburgh Castle was taken on the 29th May 1573, after a painful and lengthened siege. Grange, the noble captain, was ignominiously hanged, thus accomplishing, to the great awe of the populace, a sorrowful prophecy said to have been uttered by John Knox, who loved him, notwithstanding his change of opinions. Lethington poisoned himself to escape a similar fate; and thus the Queen's party in Scotland came to an end.

Knox had died six months before, in November 1572, which deprives us of another most remarkable figure, the greatest, perhaps, of the time. Morton, who stood by his grave when he was buried, and pronounced over him the famous epitaph, 'Here lies one who never feared the face of man—' had been of the reforming party throughout his career, and one of the Lords of the Congregation; but he, of all men, was least inclined to yield to the ministers the revenues of the old Church, and he had been denounced in the most unmeasured terms as almost a worse enemy to the Reformed Church than the Catholic persecutors. Knox and his adherents, indeed, spoke as if all the evils that befell, not only Scotland, but the world, even the horrible massacre of St Bartholomew in France, which had recently occurred, were judgments upon the erring authorities in Scotland, who, though they held the Reformed faith, still neglected to provide for its maintenance and work.

By this time the young king began to be of personal importance in the life of the country, which had virtually given up all thought of his mother, held by Elizabeth under lock and key. Mary still remained the moving influence of rebellion after rebellion; but seductive as she had always proved to those brought under her personal influence, it does not seem that she had ever touched the heart of the country, or that any popular movement ever took place in her favour. James was, as was afterwards proved in his life, of a disposition to make favourites, attaching himself always to someone, whom he petted and promoted, whatever the deserts of the favoured companion might be. The first of these, one of the most accomplished gallants of the time, was his cousin, Esmé Stewart D'Aubigny, who was the heir of Lennox, and very near in succession to the crown. Another Stewart, a son of Lord Ochiltree (and therefore, which is curious, John Knox's brother-in-law), but not related to the first, found equal favour in James's eyes, who made him Earl of Arran: and between them these two favourites did their best to upset the established order of things. They plotted so powerfully against Morton, who was loved by no one, that they drove him to resign the Regency, and then had him apprehended, and finally tried, as being 'art and part,' that is, accessory before the fact, in Darnley's murder. There was little doubt that he had been so, but so had Murray and most other of the lords of their party, who had seriously brought to trial and executed many lesser men for the same offence. Morton was condemned and executed also in his turn. This was in 1581, fourteen years after the death of Darnley, and when all pursuit of those con-

cerned, after the punishment of the actual murderers, would seem to have been at an end.

James was now supposed to reign in his own name, which meant, of course, at the will of his two favourites; both of whom were deeply distasteful to Scotland, and no less so to England, the Frenchman, D'Aubigny, being especially hateful to the government of Elizabeth. The patience of the Scots lords was soon worn out, and a year later, in 1582, they made use of the familiar old device of seizing the person of the boy king and banishing his favourites. D'Aubigny, who had been created Duke of Lennox, was sent back to France, and never returned; while Arran was thrown into prison. The conspiracy by which the downfall of these favourites was brought about is known in history as the Raid of Ruthven, the young king being beguiled into Ruthven Castle on pretence of a hunting expedition, and there kept in confinement till the lords had executed their purpose. James was still so young that he wept when he found himself a prisoner. 'Let him weep,' said one of the rebel lords; 'better that bairns greet than bearded men.' The young king was held in confinement for some months, but in June 1583 escaped, and soon everything was overturned again. A year later the Earl of Gowrie, the head of the conspiracy, had been executed in his turn, and Arran was set free and recalled to his honours. His restoration, however, did not last long. He was killed in 1596 by a Douglas, one of the relations of the Regent Morton, in revenge for the execution of his chief.

James made no more favourites in Scotland, though he had some wise and sagacious counsellors. He was

educated by a famous scholar, George Buchanan, one of the first Latinists of his time, but a man of almost republican opinions, the last in the world to favour the principle of divine right which James afterwards held so strongly. The young king himself was not without a certain sagacity and quickness of mind, and conducted himself with sufficient discretion so long as he had everything he wanted. One event which he took with too much philosophy, notwithstanding a temporary show of indignation at the moment, was the execution of his mother, Mary, after her long confinement and trouble. He had, indeed, known nothing of his mother, and had been taught from his infancy to consider her his enemy; and it was scarcely to be expected that out of natural feeling alone, so little encouraged by either facts or intercourse, he should have risked the peace of his country and his own hopes of the English succession by any attempt to revenge this act. At the same time, the acceptance of a pension from Elizabeth and of an almost cordial intercourse with her, seems heartless and unnatural. By this time, however, all his hopes were fixed upon the great prospect before him; and if Paris, as Henri IV. said, was worth a mass, England was worthy a great deal of diplomacy and endurance. He does not seem in after life to have been indifferent to his mother's reputation, but did what he could in various ways and circumstances to destroy everything that seemed to prove or encourage the idea of her guilt. We are not called upon here to follow the sad fortunes of Mary. For nineteen years she was confined in one stronghold after another, and finally executed by Elizabeth's warrant, and to her lasting shame, on the 8th February

1587. We say to Elizabeth's shame, but we are obliged to acknowledge that politically it was no crime, but a necessity ; for neither Elizabeth's crown nor James's accession were safe while so strong, so able and so fearless an antagonist lived.

Another picturesque event which occurred in this portion of James's reign was the extraordinary incident called the Gowrie Conspiracy, which forms as it were a second chapter to the previous conspiracy referred to above as the Raid of Ruthven, for which Lord Gowrie was executed—the same family being the chief actors in this less comprehensible plot. This time James was lured, as usual, while hunting, to Gowrie House in Perth by Gowrie's sons, on some wild story of a man with a pot of gold, and there led from room to room until he found himself in a lonely turret, where there was an armed man, who, however, seems to have had no evil intentions towards the king. James was alarmed, being of a timorous disposition, and, starting back, was confronted by young Ruthven with a dagger in his hand, calling him to account for his father's death. The king, however, was able to call for help from the window, and in the end, after various scuffles of a murderous kind, in which both Gowrie and his brother Ruthven were killed, managed to make his escape. The whole affair was so mysterious, that many, especially the ministers who were in Gowrie's favour, declined to believe it, and considered it a plot of James's for the destruction of the family ; there seems, however, no doubt that it was true, and a mad device to get the monarch, though no longer a boy, but well able with brain and tongue to defend himself, into subjection.

There had been in the meantime considerable

struggles with the Church, to which James was by no means attached ; but the country after these events had peace for a time, free of the contentions of armed parties and rival nobles. It was a moment of extreme importance in the history, not only of Scotland, but of Great Britain ; for Elizabeth was dying, and though the succession of James was very much a matter of course, yet there was always a certain anxiety until it was finally settled. This happened at last early in the year 1603, when Sir Robert Carey, riding post-haste in less than three days from London, a great feat of horsemanship, brought intelligence of the death of the queen, and James's accession to the greater throne, of which he was the lawful heir.

It would be difficult to tell you in the limited space we have at our command the many differences which were made in Scotland by the union of the crowns. All the border laws, for instance, which recognised a state of hostility as being on the whole the natural one, and regulated the continual raids and warfare—were abolished on both sides, and peace enjoined, if it was not always possible to insure it. The right of all Scotsmen born after James's accession to be considered as sharing the privileges of English citizens, the freedom given to Scotch shipping, the facilities of trade and the free circulation of merchandise through the entire island, were substantial advantages. On the other hand, the loss of that independence which enabled Scotland to make treaties with France and other nations on equal terms, and to take the place of an ancient kingdom in the commonwealth of nations, entailed a loss of position which made the heart of the country sore. And England was not kind or

friendly to the new-comers. Even now, in those distant days when the two countries have been welded into one by constant intercourse and all the associations of life for nearly three hundred years, there are still various bitter jests which burst forth from time to time to remind us what the English of the seventeenth century thought of the 'beggarly Scots' who followed the new king over the border. It might have been a deadly wrong done to England that the efforts of all her wisest statesmen and ablest kings had been at last accomplished, and the entire island had become one kingdom. But it is never a good thing to turn back upon old quarrels. Only the most ignorant and foolish now, the classes who never learn, who are incapable of benefiting by the experience of history or the lessons of life, can do other than be thankful that in the only way that could have made it palatable to the smaller, poorer, yet very proud and independent nation, this union had taken place.

CHAPTER XVI

JAMES I. AND VI.—AFTER THE ENGLISH ACCESSION

THE transference of the king and court to England made a great change in Scots history. It was, as we have said, the only way in which this proud nation would have endured the junction, which swallowed up her hitherto independent and very stormy and troubled career in the larger flow of the other current of life, so much akin and yet so hostile to her own, with which Scotland was now identified. The wealthier nation, accustomed to (comparative) peace at home, and the luxuries which a calmer order of affairs made possible, at once attracted and enraged the poorer: while the English, on their side, resented with a burst of sarcasm, ridicule and abuse which was almost brutal, the influx of the poor and greedy Scots who formed and accompanied the train of James, notwithstanding that the king himself was received with an adulation and servile worship which astonished as much as it delighted him. The highest nobles and the most dignified churchmen prostrated themselves before him as if he had been a god, and the foolish-wise sovereign, come to such extraordinary promotion, after being bullied and threatened during the whole of his youth,

and even in his early manhood, turned to the unaccustomed delight of flattery and obsequious service, like the sunflower to the sun. Elizabeth had exacted and trained her courtiers in this wonderful exaggeration of devotion, and James, though neither accustomed to it nor prepared for it, and even clever enough to suspect a half ridicule in it at first, yet adapted himself very readily to the unusual homage. To be reprov'd and criticised, occasionally even shaken and pulled by the sleeve to enforce an argument by a rude Scots minister, and then to find himself fawned upon and flattered by a splendid archbishop, was such a transformation of affairs as was enough to turn any man's head. He had barely escaped a fierce assault, hand to hand, at Gowrie House when he began his progress through England, where all the nobles in the country crowded to his feet, eager to serve him as menials, to hang upon his breath, to applaud every word that came from his mouth.

And never did a more curious personage step out of one historical scene to another. He was not in the least like the other gallant and generous Stewarts of his name. So unlike was he to his family, that a story has often been repeated, of which I cannot say what foundation it had, to wit, that a child's coffin, gilt and emblazoned, had been found behind a panel in the wall of the room in which he was born, containing a baby's bones, which suggested, if it did not actually make, the inference that he was himself what is called a supposititious child, secretly introduced in the place of Queen Mary's son who had died. There is not the least reason to suppose that there was any truth in this idea ; but, indeed, James's character, his rough humour, his

geniality, his not unlovable friendliness and inquisitiveness and vanity, his cowardice sometimes crossed by a gleam of valour, his delight in making a show of his own learning and cleverness, were wonderfully like what might have been produced out of some nameless burgher family in Edinburgh, though not in the least resembling any subtle strain of Italian blood, such as the slander of the time suggested by calling him the son, not of Darnley but Rizzio. There can be no doubt, however, that the usual character of the Stewart family entirely disappeared in him and in his immediate descendants, reappearing, however, a hundred and fifty years later in the gallant and unfortunate young man whom in Scotland we call Prince Charlie, and contemplate still with a regretful and visionary affection. You will be told as you grow older that a man is only what his fathers and mothers have made him, but here is a case in which a descendant was everything that his mothers and fathers were not. Such a change in all the characteristics of a race is very seldom encountered in history.

Perhaps you would like me to tell you here the story of an incident which took place just before King James came to the English throne, and which was one of the very last incidents of the warfare on the border, which, now that England and Scotland were united under one king, could continue no more. It is told in a delightful ballad called 'Kinmont Willie,' and it is also told by Scott in his *Tales of a Grandfather*. One of the famous border reivers was Willie Armstrong, of Kinmont, known in that district, where everybody was called Armstrong, as Kinmont Willie. He was riding home one night on his own side of the border, not

doing any particular mischief, though he was seldom out of it, when he was espied by a party on the other side who made a dash at him across the river and took him prisoner on Scotch soil, which was a thing forbidden at the period, there being truce between the Scots and English. He was taken to Carlisle Castle, and kept there in prison by Lord Scrope, the warden of the border. The warden on the other side was the Lord of Buccleuch, who immediately demanded that Willie should be set at liberty. Lord Scrope refused this; and he also refused a challenge sent him by Buccleuch, on the ground that to break the truce in this way was an insult to himself. Both Kinmont Willie and his chief warned the English that he should be set free whether they pleased or not, but this does not seem to have made the garrison of Carlisle watchful. One night Buccleuch, however, carried out his threat and marched to the gates with three hundred men, in the kind of dismal weather which is called a Scotch mist, rainy and dark, which covered their approach, and making a sudden entrance, without bloodshed, carried off the prisoner in triumph, who shouted out a good night to Lord Scrope as he rode away with his deliverers. The ballad of Kinmont Willie will delight you all if you can find it in any old collection of poetry.

The 'bold Buccleuch' went to England soon after and saw Queen Elizabeth, who asked him how he dared to make such an invasion on English soil. Buccleuch was the chief of the Scotts, the great family which afterwards produced Sir Walter Scott, the pride and glory of Scotland. He answered the Queen calmly that he did not know what there was which a man

dared not do. You will read about this noble house in the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel,' and you will also find a great deal about King James and his new court in England, and a wonderful picture of himself and his character in Sir Walter's novel, called *The Fortunes of Nigel*.

The affairs of Scotland after this period became almost exclusively the affairs of the Church in Scotland. I have told you what a very different character the Reformation had in the north from that which it assumed in England, how much more it proceeded from the heart of the people, and how powerful the preachers, headed by John Knox, were in this country. It was more strongly, more bitterly, and in a much more warlike way Protestant than in England, where the old order of government was retained though separated from Rome, and even the old order of divine worship, though translated into English and changed in some important particulars. Protestant—though the word has come to mean an actual and very important development of the Church, and character of religion—is really, by etymology, one who protests against error, in this case exclusively the error of Rome: the Church of Scotland was a more firm and determined protestor than any other, except, perhaps, that of Geneva. It could not bear anything that had to do with the old worship, and desired nothing so much as to make a perpetual and constant contradiction of all old religious customs, setting up a new system in every way. The unfortunate result of this was that for several centuries the Scots Church considered itself, and taught its children to believe, that it dated only from the Reformation, and that

from that event back till the very age of the Apostles there had been no true Christianity. Knox, however, though far the most powerful man among the Reformers, had not gone so far as this; he had retained a common order of worship, and though I have no doubt he would have wished it, had not managed in his time to break down the Episcopal system altogether. There were still bishops in his day, tolerated, though it is difficult to tell how much, and there is in existence a certificate of honour to some sermon preached by one of the ministers, signed by several men, the first of whom calls himself John Sanct Androis, evidently the bishop, whereas the last is John Knox.

After Knox, however, there arose men more deeply attached even than he to the Presbyterian ideal and the example of Geneva—notably one called Andrew Melville, a great scholar and an extremely impetuous man. The constitution of the Church had been settled more or less on the Presbyterian model by the first parliament held by the Regent Murray, but there were modifications afterwards, and even the order of bishops had been re-instituted by Morton, chiefly with the intention of preserving the old Church property in lay hands, by appointing a sort of false or stuffed bishop (Tulchan, so called in jest because of the habit of making a stuffed calf or image of a calf, in order that the cow bereaved of her own might be deceived by this and give her milk) who would consent to bear the title, receiving a stipend or small share of the spoils, while a powerful layman really enjoyed the revenues. You may imagine how distasteful this was to the Church, which not only hated bishops as a relic of the old system, but was struggling with all its might to

secure those revenues of the old Church for the new, and for the cause of education in Scotland. John Knox secured but a very small part of these, but yet he got something, and it is to him that Scotland originally owed the great system of parish schools, which made her for a long time the best educated country in Christendom.

Melville and his followers had no patience at all in their vehement desire for the perfection of their system. John Knox had not much, as you have seen, but this new movement had a shriller note of logic in it, and would not even endure what was bearable to Knox. And James had been rated and scolded all his life by the preachers, and had heard so much of Presbyterian parity and the wickedness of prelacy, along with a prevailing impression that a king, instead of being supreme, was rather more to be censured and restrained than other men—that he had gradually acquired a great dislike for the system altogether, and the ministers who resisted him so boldly, and would not permit his interference with their Church courts or proceedings in any way. When he came to England, where he was hailed as head of the Church, and where he was flattered, and, as it were, served on their knees by the highest dignitaries, the superiority of that system became very clearly apparent to him. It was his son who said that Presbyterianism was not a religion for a gentleman, and that where there was no bishop there would soon be no king: but this was evidently James's view also. Accordingly, he had not been very long in England, when he began to tamper with the established order of affairs in his native country, appointing new bishops summarily,

and announcing his intention of proceeding to the revision of the order of public worship. The first measure was accompanied by some advantage in the way of revenue to the Church, but this had no effect upon its determined resistance. The last was proposed and made law in a parliament held in Perth in 1618, and was embodied in the Five Articles of Perth. These were supposed to be very modest and moderate encroachments on the freedom of the Church. They were these : that the holy communion should be received kneeling as in England, instead of seated round a table as was the Scottish mode : that the sacrament might be administered privately in cases of need : that baptism should, when required, be administered privately : that confirmation should be restored : and that the four great festivals of Christianity, abolished by the Reformers because not enjoined in Scripture, and connected with many Popish ceremonies, should be again observed. These enactments, however, produced great agitation in Scotland, and were resisted strongly. It is curious that the only one of these 'Five Articles of Perth' which took root in Scotland was that of private baptism, which for a very long time was the rule instead of the exception in the Scots Church, although exactly the reverse in the English, with which these proposals were intended to make it uniform.

None of these arrangements were approved on either side ; the ministers chafed at the bishops, the bishops at the little power given them ; the one party resisted passively the 'five articles,' the changed habits and postures in public worship demanded of them, with a suppressed vehemence which sometimes ran into

popular fury ; while the other was quite dissatisfied with the moderate character of the changes. Above all, the restraints imposed upon the Church courts so dear to Scotland, which could no longer be held in the perfect freedom from State control on which they insisted, rankled at the heart of the nation and prepared much evil to come for the next reign. But James himself was wise enough not to go too far. There is a letter existing in his own hand in which he narrates how Bishop Laud, a name so disastrous in the annals of Scotland, had urged him to further measures, after he had pledged his word to the Perth Assembly to ask no more concessions from them. 'But I,' says the king, 'durst not play fast and loose with my word. He knows not the stomach of that people ; but I ken the story of my grandmother, the Queen-regent, that after she was inveigled to break her promise made to some mutineers at a Perth meeting, she never saw a good day, but from thence, being much beloved before, was despised by her people.'

The country fell into a certain quiet, or rather the anarchy was more or less veiled over after James's removal to his new Kingdom. I have spoken of the story of Kinmont Willie as the last of the border troubles before the union of the two countries. But this was only the case in the most formal sense of the word, since these troubles were of continual recurrence, and when not between English and Scotch, were carried on on the northern side, even as far as battles, by differing families and factions fighting among themselves. In the far north the same kind of troubles were continual. You will have noticed that every king is said to have done a great deal for the pacification of the Highlands

and Islands, so that the young reader would naturally imagine that everything was finally set right : till he perceives that every new monarch has to begin all over again and do the same things, or else try some new expedient from generation to generation, never with more than the most temporary success.

This was very much the case with the whole country during every minority, but especially with the Highlands, which were much more distant from the centre of affairs, and hard to penetrate either by law or by force, the mountains affording defences and strongholds for the different clans, which only the dissensions constantly arising among themselves could endanger. ‘Hawks should not pick out hawks’ een,’ the proverb says, but human hawks invariably do this, which perhaps is better for the peace of mankind in general. By means of pitting one against another, and placing the prize of another man’s lands before his rivals, who immediately proceeded to drive him out, these pacifications had been accomplished again and again, though the country always fell after a little interval of quiet into the same disorders as before. The entire realm of Scotland had fallen into this condition according to the reports sent to King James from Edinburgh. One of these reports, made in a speech before the Estates, gives a lamentable description of the state of Scotland. The Islanders oppressed the Highlandmen : the Highlanders tyrannised over their lowland neighbours : the powerful and violent in the country domineered over the lives and goods of their weak neighbours : the Borderers triumphed in the impunity of their violence, making their raids as far as the ports (gates) of Edinburgh ; murders, burn-

ings, thefts, hocking of oxen, breaking of mills, destroying of growing corn, and barbarities of all sorts were exercised in all parts of the country, Edinburgh itself being the theatre of continual butchery, revenge and daily fights, with a great many horrors too long to enumerate. But the speaker went on to say that all these dreadful disorders, which seemed beyond remedy, had been 'so reprov'd, punished and abolished by your majesty's care, power and expenses, as no nation on earth could now compare with our prosperities.'

Whether or not we may believe this flattering statement to its full extent, for it was usual, after a period of comparatively steady government to report a better condition of affairs, we cannot tell. But many warring elements were removed by the transference of the court; besides which the constant buzz of that correspondence which throws so much light upon the affairs of Scotland, but kept the country, and especially the governing class, in such constant agitation, was now entirely silenced. There was no longer an English ambassador working behind backs in his mistress's interests, no longer flying envoys from France to keep the 'auld ally' faithful to her allegiance. Scotland was, for the first time, left to manage her affairs more or less by herself. It is true that the king meddled continually, dazzled by the devotion of his new subjects, and trying in vain to make his refractory Scots admire him in his wisdom as much as his English courtiers professed to do; but he was at bottom a kindly Scot himself, and rather liked to fight and bluster, and give in.

The failure, however, of the alliance with France,

which no longer cared to keep up relations with a country which was of no further use against the enemy, but now made common cause with England instead, was at once a humiliation and a loss to Scotland. The position of those soldiers, who for generations had held so high a place among the chivalry of France, was at once changed, and there was no longer that way of attaining fortune and fame which had once so exactly suited the needs of the young Scots cavaliers, the *Quentin Durwards* of history. I will not say that this was the reason why the Scots turned their minds to colonisation, for it was naturally a different class which became the pioneers of the country in that manner; but no doubt the new obstacle in the way of other outlets gave force to the native instinct. It was in the reign of James VI. that the first impulse of emigration began. One very important feature in it was the acquisition of a portion of territory on the American continent to be called New Scotland, one part of which oddly enough has retained the name by which it is described in the Latin of its charter to this day, *Nova Scotia*. To encourage emigration there, James agreed to grant the title and style of a baronet to every settler who took a certain portion of land in this new Scotland. Knighthood, which had been the universal order of nobility, was not hereditary, and belonged to the individual only; but a baronetcy made the title hereditary, and thus established a new degree of rank among commoners. Baronetcies are still conferred every day, but the original bearers of the title are still distinguished as baronets of *Nova Scotia*, and bear a bloody hand in their armorial bearings as their

special distinction. The separation, however, of New England and New Scotland as separate fields of colonisation did not last ; and the Scots do not long remain distinct among the other colonists ; but the name of those Nova Scotian baronetcies remain a special grade of honour to show the special connection which it was intended to form between the new continent and the northern kingdom. Another kind of colonisation took place in a very different quarter, in Ireland, where the Scots, from the other side of the sea, swarmed into Ulster, when abandoned by its great chiefs. It is well known that a strong flavour of Scotch character, and even accent, has remained to this day in that great province. The process had been begun by the forfeited Highlanders who escaped to a country so congenial to them, and in which they had their first origin, when dispossessed of their lands, in the 'pacification' before referred to ; but when the Scots of Galloway and Ayrshire followed, and even Lowlanders further north, so many as ten thousand persons having, according to one report, gone over from Aberdeen and the adjoining counties within two years—the effect of such an immigration was very great and has been permanent.

James died on the 27th March 1625, having reigned or nominally reigned from his cradle, the first of the Scottish Jameses who did not die either by violence or of a broken heart. He went out of the world peacefully enough, though he had come into it amid such horrors and tumults, but left a crop of dragons' teeth for his son to deal with as he could.

CHAPTER XVII

CHARLES I

CHARLES I. was, we may say, the first king that had ever reigned in Scotland who was not a Scot. A child when he left the country, his entire training had been English, and it is evident that he began his life without any of that partiality for his native kingdom, which it is so hard to eradicate from the bosom of a Scotsman born. The familiar relationship between king and people, which had been the strength of his house, had no place in the bosom of a man whose ideas were all of divine right and the supremacy of the Lord's anointed above all other human pretensions and endowments, and even above law. The contentious, turbulent and hot-headed nation, which was so jealous of all interference, especially with its religion, and to whom the mere suggestion of a mortal head of the Church was blasphemy, awakened in him nothing but a haughty dislike and contempt. He had no sympathy, either with its aspirations or its deficiencies. He became King of Scotland, rather as Edward I. might have done, or any other of the English kings who had asserted supremacy over the Scots, than like

a native monarch bound by many kindly traditions to his race. No man more unlike the traditionary character of the old Stewarts of Scotland was ever born. Their sense of humour, so often too broad for a king, their friendliness, even when they were most severe, their sense of nationality and kinship with their people, did not exist in him. James VI. had failed in the courage for which his family was conspicuous, but he had their humour to a high degree, and those familiar habits which did not please the Englishmen. But Charles was of the gravest and most ceremonious type of Englishman, more like a Spaniard than a Saxon or a Norman. It was not in him to carry off anything with a jest. He did not 'know the stomach of this people.' He considered his kingdoms, and specially the lesser and poorer of his two kingdoms, as existing only to do his will and receive his decisions, whatever they might be, as supreme. And he was resolved to attain his purpose and carry out his ideal, without taking what was possible into consideration for a moment. This is in itself, perhaps, a grander idea of what a king should do, than anything ever to be attained by a constitutional monarch; but it was one which the times were beginning to outgrow, and it was entirely against all the traditions of his house.

King James, in the letter I have quoted, describes Bishop Laud as having endeavoured to force upon him 'an ill-fangled platform, to make that stubborn Kirk stoop more to the English pattern.' And Laud, whom James neither liked nor trusted, was high in the confidence of his son. One of the first acts of Charles's reign was a proceeding which moved all Scotland to

something of the old alarm and confusion. He issued a decree for the resumption of Church lands—that is for calling back to the disposition of the crown all the property that had belonged to the old Church, its estates and possessions, and the tithes which were its common revenues. These, I have told you, had fallen into the hands of the lords at the time of the Reformation, not without many a struggle and protest on the part of John Knox and his party, who considered them to belong to the Reformed Church, for the uses of instruction and education throughout the country; and it was chiefly the nobles who had got possession of these lands, who were fluttered at first by this proposal. The Church stood by an interested spectator, only the bishops moving in the matter, the ministers well aware that it was not their interest that was thought of in the proceedings of the king.

The measure itself, however, was not so revolutionary as it looked, for such nobles as submitted and did not fight were allowed to compromise and retain some of their spoil, and it was only those who resisted who were treated harshly. That the intention was to set up again the Episcopal System, and alter the Presbyterian methods into the old forms, as they had been modified by the Church of England, was very clear. But, curiously enough, it was the accompanying attempt to restore the vestments of the Church which excited more the alarm of the people. The white robes of the clergy, the lawn sleeves of the bishops, had all been swept away at the Reformation, the latter being especially scorned and denounced by Knox himself, and afterwards, in the following genera-

tion, by Andrew Melville, as 'rags of Rome.' The discussion about 'the whites,' as these were called, sounds almost absurd when we consider it as a matter upon which the country was to be rent in two : but it is not very long since a similar question, that about preaching in the surplice, agitated England from one end to another. The Scotch ministers considered 'the whites' not only as the garb of Rome, but of every heathen priesthood, and struggled against them with determination and fury. And on the other side, Bishop Laud, who had accompanied King Charles to Edinburgh on his first visit to Scotland, pushed the Archbishop of Glasgow from the king's side, because he wore no rochet nor sleeves of lawn. The country had been in a most confused and chaotic state before in respect to the Church. The bishops existed on sufferance, except at times, when, as during Charles's visit, they were forced to the front, and raised into importance by his support. The people gave only a most unwilling and occasional obedience to the articles about kneeling to receive the sacrament and other points of ritual ; the clergy, save under coercion, struggled against the surplice as if it had been a matter of life and death. Nothing can be more dangerous in a country than this condition of forced compliance and secret rebellion. The peace-loving or indifferent members of a community, who do their best to keep up a troubled consent on the surface to laws so displeasing to the rest of their country folk, are of very doubtful service to a country. Without their weak consent, which only retards and strengthens the outbreak, those who make unwelcome laws might oftener pause in carrying them out.

The first visit of Charles to Scotland was paid in 1633; he was crowned in the church attached to Holyrood as King of Scotland with great pomp and ceremony, and it would seem that he had already impressed the country with a feeling very different from that with which Scotland had hitherto regarded the line of native monarchs, between whom and their people, whatever happened, there was a link of familiarity and kindness, sadly disturbed indeed by the tragic events of Queen Mary's reign, but not even then destroyed. But Charles was a Spanish-faced sovereign, serious as death and as arbitrary—black-a-vised, solemn, incapable of a jest. He moved like a god through the old halls and galleries where the Jameses, always young, always gallant (if with one doubtful exception), swept lightly to parliament or tournament or fight, facing their fate gaily, whatever it might be, with the commons out of doors always ready to shout, even if the nobles within were unruly now and then, and felt themselves as good gentlemen as the king according to the proverb. The very fact that they were as good gentlemen as the king made the relation more wholesome; but nobody was as good a gentleman as Charles, the first of Scottish kings whom the half-divinity of the Lord's Anointed clothed as with a garment.

And the Church which he set himself to crush was different from John Knox's church, which had fought so fiercely for the faith, and accomplished a revolution, in which there was such strain and stress of personal danger and daring, and so many great national affairs and imperial interests to consider. To kneel or to sit, to wear a white gown or a black, is a less serious con-

troversy than those which concern the actual well-being and freedom of a country. The mere fact that the mind of the time was as keenly agitated by these details as with the more important matters of faith, makes the quarrel at once keener, and more stinging and bitter. And the royal party omitted nothing that could make sharper these sensations. Everything that was done was arbitrary and tyrannical. The parliament was not chosen in the usual manner, its discussions were overawed by the king's presence, who was said to make marks against the names of those who opposed him; and when a 'humble supplication' or protest was presented according to constitutional precedents and law, the quite legal and respectful document was treated almost as an act of treason, and it was only by chance that the chief mover in it escaped the death of a traitor. Had the intention of Charles's visit been to exasperate and humiliate the proud and stubborn country which he did not understand, he could not have succeeded more perfectly. Laud, his companion and chief adviser, insulted even the unfortunate bishops, who, with no party of supporters behind them, were at his mercy, and had to yield to whatever was required of them, or to consent to their own destruction. They knew that the country would not take their part if they displeased the king or his ministers; but they had themselves, as appears, but small stomach for the vestments, and would much rather have proceeded quietly and by degrees, more superintendents than bishops, more presbyters than prelates, had they been left to themselves. But the king's solemn determined countenance, and Laud's imperious orders permitted no holding back.

As soon as Charles returned to England, he and his advisers set to work to complete the enterprise which they had thus begun. The first thing taken in hand was a book of 'Canons and Constitutions Ecclesiastical for the Government of the Church of Scotland,' in which every particular of Church order was set forth according to the ordinances of the Church of England, entirely ignoring those which the Scots Church, from the time of the Reformation, and especially in the previous reign under Andrew Melville, had set forth. All the cherished Church courts were swept away, and the old Episcopal system formally re-established with every rule for divine worship, in minutest detail, including even a stipulation for shorter sermons. There was some pretence that the Scotch bishops had a hand in the preparation of this book, but it was frankly imposed upon the country without any question of consulting Scotland, or subjecting the proposed change to any discussion, by the will of the king.

Accompanying this, and reducing all its rules to practice, came a service book, following closely that of the Church of England, but with some additions which were considered by all critics to denote a desire to approach it more closely to the Roman ritual. Both these were sent to Scotland with peremptory orders that they were to be put in use at once without question or any attempt to secure consent. Unsupported by either parliament or assembly, they were made law by the king's word, and proclaimed, with the penalty of 'horning,' a sort of outlawry, on all who were disobedient. The most of us who have not entered much into Church questions, believe that

Scotland at that time, as now, was without any prayer book at all, and that the ministers conducted all the services extempore, as we say—as has been done in the later history of the Church; but as a matter of fact, the system of extempore prayers originated in England rather than in Scotland, and at this crisis a book of Common Order, which we have already mentioned, and which is now called John Knox's Liturgy, was in constant use, read in all the churches; in itself a very seemly and reverent ritual, simpler than that of England, and without responses, which were always disagreeable to the Scots, but in every respect a well and carefully-ordered form of worship. King Charles imposed his new service book on Scotland with the same peremptory promptitude as the Canons Ecclesiastical. In this, also, there was no consultation, no preparation; the whole system of the Church's offices, as well as of her government, was overthrown at a stroke, and a new system arbitrarily placed in their stead.

It was in the middle of the summer of 1637 that this rash and foolish revolution was accomplished, or, at least, attempted. The great cathedral church of St Giles, now restored in admirable taste, but filled with pews or fixed seats, according to the custom of Scotch churches in modern times, was no doubt at that period in much the same state as under the ancient faith, the great nave filled with movable chairs or stools as in foreign churches and English cathedrals. These were chiefly folding stools—heavy wood with leather stretched upon the crossed legs to form the seat, very dangerous missiles when used in that way, but requiring a strong hand to throw them. At the

early morning service the Book of Common Order had been quietly followed as usual, and the fears and suspicions of the worshippers, who were present in great numbers expecting something that was about to happen, were allayed. But it was rumoured that the new service book was to be produced at a later service, and a great number of people gathered, crowding the church.

There is a time-honoured tradition that it was the unpremeditated outburst of an old woman which gave the signal of instant and dangerous resistance. A certain Janet Geddes, a herb woman, or seller of vegetables, who had her booth just outside the cathedral in the crowded High Street, where all sorts of booths and open tables for the commonest merchandise blocked the way, was no doubt a character well known in Edinburgh and recognised at once by the excited crowd. It is said that she listened with her hand to her ear as the Dean of Edinburgh in his surplice began the morning prayer; but how far he had gone we are not told, when suddenly rising up, Janet seized her folded stool, and flinging it in the direction of the lectern, cried, 'Villain, wilt thou say mass at my lug?' I was myself brought up to believe this story as if it had been gospel, but I am almost sorry to tell you there is no certainty in it at all, and though Janet Geddes existed, she was probably a king's woman, and would not have taken any such part. Someone, however, and she certainly a woman, flung the heavy stool at the reader's head, and in a moment the church rang with shouts and cries, the fauldstools flew about, another woman struck with her Bible, in the face, a man who was so bold as

to say amen in the middle of the furious crowd, and all was instant tumult and riot.

The Edinburgh mob was always a thing to fear. In a previous chapter we have seen how small a spark was necessary to kindle a great fire, and how the merest chance impulse set agoing that wholesale destruction of churches and their embellishments from which all Scotland has suffered since. The outbreak of popular wrath was as urgent and violent now, and bishops and priests had to flee as best they could with their obnoxious mass books. From that moment the fate of Episcopacy and all the fair order and more gracious ritual, which the Church of England alone among all the branches of the Church affected by the Reformation had been able to preserve—was sealed in Scotland. Thus King Charles and his minister, by their foolhardiness and arbitrary action, not only made all that they desired impossible in the northern kingdom, but began the more general movement which cost them both their lives.

The spirit shown in Edinburgh was manifested over the whole country. In the north there long remained an inclination towards Episcopacy, but yet we read of the Bishop of Brechin that he went to church at a very early hour 'with his pistols and his servants,' or, as another report goes, 'his wife with weapons,' and closing the doors to prevent the entrance of any objectors, read the service there; which might be of use as a demonstration of loyalty, but only proved more completely how impossible was the introduction of the new liturgy. A pause full of trouble followed these renewed attempts to impose the new order, which the bishops and others concerned in

it hesitated to undertake, seeing it was distinctly at peril of their lives. It was evident that neither the king nor Laud had the least understanding of the meaning either of the revolt or the pause. They did not know the stomach of that people. To them it was negligence, inattention to the royal orders, petulant resistance to measures which were to be imposed by the law and must be adopted in the end. They sent out threatening proclamations, and threats of 'horning' or 'putting to the horn'—which meant outlawry and confiscation—but took no other means of subduing the storm.

The Scots on their part got up petitions from every part of the country and every class of the population, with profuse professions of loyalty, but an imperative prayer that the service book and the canons might be withdrawn. We are told of an impressive and picturesque scene which took place on the passage of the Duke of Lennox through Edinburgh at this time. From Holyrood to the Council Chamber in the High Street, that is, along the whole course of the Canon-gate which is of considerable length, and was then one of the noblest streets in Europe, the Duke rode between two dense lines of spectators. For a certain portion of the way the ministers were ranged on one side, and the nobility and gentry on the other, among them the best names and the most notable persons in Scotland. Sixty-eight petitions, each signed by the entire community from which it came, were put into his hands to be delivered to King Charles, and the country waited with ever-growing excitement for the reply, Edinburgh being crowded with anxious visitors from every district. The only answer was given in further

proclamations ordering all strangers out of Edinburgh, and threatening dire punishment, the removal of the Courts of Law and State offices from Edinburgh, and the loss of all its privileges as a capital. The result was that the mob broke into wild riot and threatened both bishops and magistrates; and though the higher classes interfered for the protection of individuals, it was done sternly, showing that their sympathies were not with the officials but with the crowd.

For some time longer this attitude of suspense was kept up in Scotland, the country waiting an answer to repeated appeals. The council, which represented Charles and was entrusted with the execution of his will, gladly got rid of the crowd that pressed about them, by permitting the formation of a sort of outdoor parliament, formed by representatives of every class in the nation, the nobles, lesser barons, burgesses and clergy, entitled and known in history as the 'Tables,' to set forth the desires of the people. Four representatives were chosen for each class, and thus a formidable band of sixteen of the best men in Scotland confronted the alarmed council, which in itself had no power except to carry out the orders of the king. They embodied their desires in a petition for the withdrawal of the obnoxious books and the rescinding of the recent proclamations in respect to Edinburgh, but were kept several months waiting for a reply. When it came at last, it was in the form of a repetition of all the offensive ordinances. The Tables met this with a strenuous protest according to Scots law, and immediately proceeded to a still stronger and more remarkable act, one of the most striking in history: this was the publication and universal signature of

the National League and Covenant, an event of the greatest importance, as it proved, not only to Scotland but to the empire—the beginning of the end of the House of Stewart and the commencement of a new world.

CHAPTER XVIII

CHARLES I.—THE COVENANT

THE Solemn League and Covenant from this time became the standard and charter of Scotland, the inspiration of the whole aroused and excited country, making Scotland, what Carlyle has called her, a unanimous hero nation for one great moment of her history. It was in reality a great bond and solemn engagement taken by every man for himself, and uniting every class and rank into one, for the preservation of the reformed religion, and the Presbyterian form of Church government, in opposition to Popery, Prelacy, and all enactments that could effect the independence of the Church. It was not, however, a revolutionary document ; for those who signed were thereby bound to seek the safety and honour of the king, and solemnly pledged their allegiance to him. More than once already had a Covenant or Band, been sworn in Scotland. The first of these documents belongs to the period when Mary of Guise was Queen-regent, when the house of Tudor was still firmly established on the English Throne, and the two nations were independent of, if not hostile to each other. It was sworn in brief and vehement words by the Congregation on the

3d December 1557 ; and pledged all who signed it to establish and maintain 'with our whole power, substance and our very lives' the Reformed Faith 'the most blessed Word of God' against 'Satan and all wicked powers that does intend tyranny or trouble against the Congregation.' A second Band of a similar description but at once longer and stronger with much fierce denunciation of Popery, sometimes called the Second or the King's Confession, was drawn up in 1581, at the beginning of James VI.'s reign, as an expedient to hold the body of the faithful together, and to bind the monarch to them, and to the reformed doctrine and worship ; and it was subscribed at that period by the king first, and all the people after him, but without enthusiasm or any particular effect on history. When fifty years later the kingdom, driven by Charles and Laud into fierce rage and a sort of white heat of passion, felt itself in want of some symbol which should rally all together and pledge them, as by an oath, to one mode of action, this old instrument, never of any profound importance before, was thought of by the leaders of the national party, and brought out of the national archives with all the fervour and enthusiasm of men who find the very weapon they require prepared and ready to their hand. They brought it forth as an overwhelming answer to all the proclamations of the king and his contemptuous rejection of their protests. When this mode of national action had first been adopted Mary Tudor was reigning in England, and there was every prospect of a strong and united effort to re-establish the Roman Church throughout the country, and to crush the Reformation altogether. The cir-

cumstances now were even more dangerous and certainly more vexatious and harassing, for the king, changed almost into a foreigner and enemy by the course of events, was himself the oppressor, attempting to put down both the faith and the independence of the country, and to impose his personal will upon it with a high hand.

Accordingly, certain additions were made to the document of 1581 describing the situation of affairs, the determination of those who signed to keep to their faith at all hazards, and to bear no alterations or innovations in the constitution of the Church, reformed and settled by law. 'We promise and swear by the great name of the Lord our God to continue in the profession and obedience of the said religion, and that we shall defend the same, and resist all those contrary errors and corruptions according to our vocation, and to the utmost of that power which God hath put into our hands, all the days of our life.' This was the vow now about to be taken with such fervour and zeal, as perhaps never even in the days of Knox had been seen before, by the whole of lowland Scotland, the strong and steadfast body of the realm.

It is a little curious to find them proclaiming their loyalty to the king almost in the same breath. 'With the same heart we declare before God and men, that we have no intention nor desire to attempt anything that may turn to the dishonour of God or to the diminution of the king's grace and authority. But on the contrary, we promise and swear that we shall, to the utmost of our power, with our means and our lives, stand to the defence of our dread sovereign, the

king's majesty, his power and authority, in the defence and preservation of the aforesaid true religious liberties and laws of the kingdom.' They were careful to add that they had no thought 'of withdrawing ourselves from our dutiful subjection and obedience to his majesty's government, which by the descent and under the reign of one hundred and seven kings is most cheerfully acknowledged by us.' The little characteristic Scotch brag of the one hundred and seven kings, a descent longer than any other nationality could boast, had it been true, shows how sincere, though how strange, was this principle of serving the king by opposing him to the death. It had been only in the last reign that George Buchanan, the great scholar, had authoritatively set forth the long visionary line of ancient kings, long devoutly believed in by all Scotland and respectfully received by the general world, which gave to the 'ancient kingdom' a place and importance which its size and wealth did not justify. The thought of a republic or of any new system was not in the minds of these Scotsmen. They were ready to compel their king to keep the law, to hold his authority not according to his own will but to theirs; but they had no thought of throwing him off, or of putting any other head of government in his stead.

On the Sunday after this great resolution was taken, the churchyard of Old Greyfriars in Edinburgh witnessed an extraordinary scene. The old church of the Franciscans was still in existence, and the situation is one of the most picturesque in Edinburgh, the Castle Rock towering over it, and a thousand historical associations gathering about the spot where

so many forefathers of that eager crowd were lying. The altar tombs were made into impromptu tables, the sheets of paper spread out, the inkhorn passing from hand to hand. From the noble to the poorest tradesman there was one eager rush to sign; many made their oath with tears and cries of excitement and devotion, some, it is said, with their own blood. There does not seem to have been a dissentient, scarcely a lukewarm person. Sir Walter Scott says in his *Tales of a Grandfather* that it is not to be supposed that terror of prelacy or opposition to the prayer book was the cause of their enthusiasm, but rather a determination to secure liberty of conscience and the right of the subject. Sir Walter is the greatest of authorities, but I think he is mistaken here. It is only people who have learned much by experience or otherwise who recognise that the outward form is only the outward form, and not religion itself. I have heard it said, even in the present day, that English persons who attend the Scotch Church in Scotland, or Scotch who attend the English Church in England, had 'changed their religion,' as if Christianity were not one and the same however we pray. But in these days a horror of Rome, of the mass and everything that had the faintest resemblance to it, had taken what we might almost call an insane hold of the public mind, and a change in the prayers, the ceremonies, the modes of worship, came home to every man. It was everybody's business, not like a principle of government or an affair of the State: and this attempt was universally believed to be what we call the thin end of the wedge. And it is by no means certain that it was not so. Charles I. would

never, perhaps, have gone beyond an enforced uniformity with the English Church; but we know that his sons did; and had there been no Covenant and no resistance at this period, it would, no doubt, have left an opening later for a still more bitter struggle.

It was on the first of March 1638 that the Covenant was signed by all Edinburgh in a transport and rapture of religious feeling: and a few months later, when the excitement had flown all over Scotland, and the same solemn oath had been sworn with the same passion everywhere as far north as Inverness, and throughout all the west, everywhere, in short, with the exception of Aberdeen and the country of the Gordons, where the Marquis of Huntly, the chief of that clan, a Catholic, was the 'Cock o' the North,' and bore almost the state of an independent prince. The leaders of the Covenanters followed up this step by collecting an army under the command of General Lesley, who had fought on the Continent under Gustavus Adolphus, and was a tried and experienced general. The king was reported to be on his way with a great army, and Scotland was roused to another struggle for life. Charles, however, apparently startled by these energetic movements, thought better of it, and finally decided to withdraw the innovations for the moment, remitting the final question to an assembly of the Church. The Covenanters, however, were made aware, by private revelations of the correspondence which passed between the king and the Marquis of Hamilton, the head of that powerful family, and next heir to the Scotch crown, who was the High Commissioner in Scotland at the time of the signing of the Covenant—that Charles had no intention of keeping

his word: and though they laid down their arms for the moment and accepted his statement, it was with a well understood resolution that their army should re-assemble again at the shortest notice. Instead, however, of the promised Assembly of the Church, Charles called a Parliament in Scotland, hoping, perhaps, to treat more easily with men accustomed to the restraints of statesmanship, than with those inspired by religious enthusiasm, and insisting upon laws of absolute right and wrong. But the Estates were not more pliable than the General Assembly: and that Parliament of the Church called on its own authority a memorable meeting in Glasgow, at which the Lord High Commissioner appeared forbidding its proceedings, and declaring it closed by the king's command: notwithstanding which these proceedings were carried on without a pause according to the laws and constitution of the Church which acknowledged no control from the secular power. Charles then resumed his intention of marching upon Scotland with a powerful army. But he was arrested on the other hand by the refusal of the English Parliament to grant supplies. The struggle had begun on that side also, and the curious spectacle was for the first time presented in history of an almost 'union of hearts' between England and Scotland, the latter in actual conflict, the other rapidly ripening towards war, against their common king.

The Scots seized an opportunity so much to their advantage, re-assembled their army in a wonderfully short time, and, without waiting for the king's advance, marched into England, reaching as far as the Tyne, where they won the battle of Newburn, dispersing the force which had been posted there to

intercept them, and gained possession of the important town of Newcastle. This happened in August 1640, more than two years after the signing of the Covenant, a period which had been occupied in careful consolidation of the power of the Covenanters in Scotland, as well as by many written negotiations, the king changing his tone according to the progress of events, from that of threats and denunciations to a sudden acquiescence in which nobody believed. It was, we must allow, a hard struggle for Charles, and one for which, in his certainty that he had divine right on his side, he was not prepared; for while his Scottish subjects, triumphant and unopposed, demanded a complete surrender of all his acts and attempts against their liberties, his English subjects, so far from backing him up as in every other question with the Scots they had been accustomed to do, were engaging in the same struggle behind him as that which the Scots had carried to a successful termination in front of him. The bigger rebel was much encouraged and strengthened by the triumph of the smaller, which, indeed, was fighting the battles of England as well as its own; and the presence of the Scots army in England, instead of arousing the indignation and rage of the English as in former times, was a great support and help to the parliamentary party, although regarded with wild alarm by the Northumbrians, who knew of old what a Scotch invasion meant. This invasion of the Scots, however, was very different from the old fierce raids of the Borderers, and was accompanied by as little exaction or destruction as is consistent with war. Finally peace was made after endless negotiations conducted at Ripon and afterwards at London, where the Scotch com-

missioners found themselves the masters of the occasion, universally applauded and feasted, and were witnesses of the fall and execution of the great leaders of Charles's policy, Strafford and Laud. At that terrible moment in Charles's career, resistance was no longer possible ; the king yielded in every point, and the Scots, obtaining as indemnity the large sum of three hundred thousand pounds, marched home in triumph.

A year later the king paid another visit to Scotland, which was one of the things to which he had pledged himself. One cannot but feel that it must have been a humiliating visit for a proud monarch, so strong in the conviction of his own right, and so entirely unconvinced that his subjects had any rights which could stand against him. That he should have been compelled to give dignities and rewards to the men who had carried every point against him by armed force is a proof of the helplessness in which he found himself, confronted by the Estates, who used every formula of loyalty, yet calmly proceeded in their own course in spite of all his efforts to turn them from it. He created General Lesley Earl of Leven, and gave additional honours to several others among the stern barons who would not yield a jot of the liberties of their country and Church for all the blandishments of the king.

Charles did, however, succeed in securing one man who was worth many, and who for a short time threw lustre upon his cause. This was the young Earl of Montrose, who had been one of the military leaders of the Covenanters when hostilities began. He had showed his mettle in the north country in subduing

and actually forcing the Covenant upon the unwilling town of Aberdeen, and he had held command, though probably not so high as he thought himself entitled to, in the Scots army under Lesley. During the negotiations at Ripon he had, however, veered to the side of Charles, and when he returned to Edinburgh had already fallen under suspicion. His banner in his first battle had been inscribed 'For Religion, the Covenant, and the Country.' It was now for the king; but no one calls Montrose a traitor, though he changed his party completely from one side to the other. It was a change for which he eventually paid with his life. He was one of the last of the knights errant, always dear to Scotland, bringing the laws of romance into history, always brilliant and sudden, surprising his age with his achievements—yet also always unfortunate. Such a man, if successful, would lose half his fame. He was a poet besides, and has left some noble verses behind him, which give everyone who loves literature a strong prejudice in favour of the hero. But it must be allowed that literature does much often to turn the severe balance of justice in history, and that such a man as Montrose, who interests and delights the imagination, generally gets more than his just share of fame.

We have not room enough in this little volume to tell you how the history of England went on, though at this period the two ought to be read together. The two countries had never been so near each other as now. A little while before the Scotch ministers had been indignant, because, as they said, of the nicknames given to them, Puritan being the chief of these names; but now they were better

instructed, and found in the Puritans their brothers and friends. If ever the Church of England was likely to have been overthrown it was in those days, and the Scots were extremely anxious to persuade their English brethren to accept Presbytery, the system which had grown so dear to themselves. In this they did not succeed: but the Covenant was adopted by the parliamentary party, though never, I think, with enthusiasm. No scenes like that in Greyfriars Churchyard ever took place in London; perhaps the crowd there would be unlikely, under any circumstances, to be so passionately excited by any religious subject. The Scots accepted, in their turn, something from the English. A number of Commissioners from Scotland took part in the Westminster Assembly, a very famous council of Protestant divines, which took place in London after the war had begun and the king's standard had been raised: that having been done on the 28th of August 1642, less than a year after Charles's return from Scotland. London was then in the hands of the Parliament, the king fighting in other parts of the kingdom, and the Puritans in the ascendant there. The Scots received the Confession of Faith resolved upon by this assembly, along with other still more elaborate systems of doctrine, such as those contained in the larger and shorter catechisms, in full confidence that England was also pledged to adopt them, and that so the two countries would be indissolubly united by the ties of common belief. The curious effect of this was that Scotland accepted a religious constitution far more elaborate and rigid than the simple system she had adopted by herself, and that the English, to please whom she did so, did

not accept it, except for a very short time, but left the maintenance of this wonderful body of doctrine to the Church of Scotland to be by her carried forth for several generations with passion, and to colour ever after her whole life and method of thought.

This, however, occurred in the middle of Charles's unhappy wars, and we have yet to tell how the Scots took part in them. While Charles was still in Edinburgh, there had been a rising in Ireland in the king's name, and, it was said, under his commission, which had the most disastrous influence on Charles's fortunes. For the native Irish were then half savage as the native Highlanders also are pronounced on all sides to have been, and the consequence was a dreadful massacre of the English and Protestants, which had almost as great an effect upon the mind of both kingdoms as the massacre of St Bartholomew in France, all the more as the Irish leaders swore that their forces had been raised and commissioned by direct arrangement of the king, and specially against the Protestants who were threatening his throne. The king himself disowned this bargain, but his word did not inspire much faith, and it was known to have been his intention to bring a force of Irish against Scotland. This incident stimulated both the English and Scots, and gave peculiar horror to the thought that a horde of wild men, caring for nothing but the orders of their chief, might be let loose upon them at any moment. You will find an account of the effect produced by the report of this Irish massacre in a book called *John Inglesant*, written by Mr J. H. Shorthouse, where it is very vividly described.

In the common interest of both kingdoms it now

seemed necessary that Scotland should repeat the invasion which had been so successful, and again march an army into England to the aid of their brethren, who showed so promising an inclination to follow their example in religious matters. They set out on their march in the middle of winter, twenty-one thousand men, under old Lesley and his nephew, David Lesley, who was almost a greater general than himself. When the Scots army had again made a successful march into Northumberland, taken Newcastle and effected a junction with the parliamentary forces, Montrose, probably finding little place among the Cavaliers, to whom the very name of Scot would convey a prejudice, resolved upon raising an army in the Highlands in order to call back his countrymen from this expedition into the south. He made all his arrangements with great skill and care, calculating, however, upon a strong body of the king's troops to march from England with him in order to meet the advancing host from the north. But proving unsuccessful in this, and seeing no other way to gain the gathering place of his northern forces, Montrose set out with the usual train of servants and retainers which always accompanied a person of his rank, as if he were going to join the king at Oxford, but on the way silently stole out from amid this imposing train, dressed as a groom in attendance upon two gentlemen who accompanied him, and, riding night and day, traversed the whole border country and the midland of Scotland until he reached Tullibeltam, in Perthshire, where the nucleus of his army was gathering. Thus a sudden flame burst out in the north, surprising the Scots who were so far away from home, fighting the battles of their neighbours.

For a time Montrose carried everything before him. He kept his wild army in hand with wonderful skill, adapting himself to their method of warfare, and taking advantage of all their special powers, in the way of sudden marches, dispersions, re-assemblings. He took Aberdeen, Perth and Dundee, one after another, and brought the country almost entirely under the power of the king once more. His promptitude, his rapid perception of the advantages of the Highland mode of warfare, his sudden successes by means of that very impetuosity of the clans which make them weak against disciplined armies, filled the country at once with terror and admiration. Chivalrous as his character was, the cruelties practised by his bands in the helpless towns, where all that could be brought against them was a sudden levy of untrained burghers, peaceful citizens and their dependents, unaccustomed to war, were more terrible than anything that had been hitherto known; and the very name of the Highlanders, increased by the dreadful reputation of the Irish force which had joined them, became terrible to the peaceful communities in the north. For a moment it seemed that, in the absence of the Scots army, Scotland itself had been brought to complete subjection. But when Montrose's wild host was confronted by David Lesley and the tried soldiers under him, who had been sent back to Scotland hurriedly to quench the insurrection, it was overcome as rapidly as it had arisen, and the battle of Philiphaugh put an end at once to his career, and to all possibilities of the re-establishment in Scotland of the authority of the king.

The end of the Scots conflict with King Charles is a painful one. After he had been defeated again and

again by the English forces of the Parliament, and his cause was lost in England, he bethought himself of the Scots, still lingering in Northumberland, diminished by the party sent under David Lesley against Montrose, and no longer the important auxiliary it had been, now that the arms of the Parliament had been triumphant everywhere. It was, indeed, lingering on a question of pay, waiting to receive the arrears of the promised subsidies with which the Parliament had secured its help, when suddenly, in disguise, with a couple of attendants, Charles presented himself in Lesley's camp. It is said that he had hesitated to the last moment whether he should take this step or go on to London, and it seems strange that he should have chosen to put himself into the hands of the Scots, with whom he had been in conflict for years, and upon whom he had no personal claim of sympathy or brotherly kindness. But so he did. At all events, he was not to them the man Charles Stewart, but the descendant of one hundred and seven kings, which was some consolation in the failure of every other comfort.

He was received with every appearance of welcome and respect. Lesley, now Earl of Leven, the general, offered his sword, the semblance of command, to the fugitive, who took and retained it, a thing unknown, except in the case of disgrace to an officer, meaning it is to be supposed, that henceforward he meant himself to retain the command of the army : which was an unfortunate and ungracious beginning, though he does not appear to have really interfered. The Scots, whom we may well believe to have been greatly troubled by this most inconvenient guest, marched back to New-

castle, which they had taken in the early part of the campaign, that the king might be in greater safety. It was no sooner known that Charles had taken refuge with the Scots, than they were summoned by the English parliament to give him up, and refused to do so. In any way that we can look at them, the following negotiations are painful. The English threatened repudiation of all their debts, and war declared against the Scots, if they retained the king under their protection ; while, within their lines, Charles did much to alienate his hosts, hating and opposing, as he did, all their principles. He maintained a sharp, but not unamiable, controversy with Alexander Henderson, one of the chief of the covenanting ministers, who had been moderator of the assembly in Glasgow, and held the most prominent place in the Church. It is believed that Charles had intended at least to permit it to be supposed that Henderson had converted him, and so secure the adherence and support of the Scots, and a safe retreat to Edinburgh. But he was too honest for this part, and boldly maintained in argument his own principle of divine right—in the centre of an army which had been called together to oppose it, and in face of another which had already begun to cherish schemes of washing it out in his blood.

Eight weary months passed in this uncertainty ; weary, no doubt, for Charles, and disturbing and perplexing in the highest degree for his protectors. At last the Scots' claims were paid, and there being now no reason for remaining in England, they withdrew, giving up the king to the Parliament. They were in no way prepared for the fate that was to befall him ; not even the English were aware of what was coming, except,

perhaps, some few dark schemers and statesmen too thorough in their logic and determination. The fact remains that the Scots gave up the fugitive who had trusted himself to their protection. He was a man whom they had never loved, and who had done everything he could to destroy their peace and overpower their cherished independence; but yet he was their guest, whom, by the highest code of honour, though one seldom carried out, they were bound to defend. It was justifiable that all their enemies, and every voice of the many which were raised after the tragedy in passionate anger and sorrow, should say they had sold their king. On the other hand, it would be hard to say why they should have risked everything, their lives, their freedom, their beloved Church, their national independence, for the sake of one who had threatened them with the last extremities of persecution, and against whom they were in open revolt. There is little doubt, however, that had there been any idea of what Charles's fate was to be, his ancient kingdom would have run any risk rather than deliver him up to it.

Montrose mad with grief and rage, after the catastrophe of the king's execution in London, attempted once more to raise an army in the Highlands, but was instantly crushed, taken and executed in Edinburgh on the 25th of May 1650 with every circumstance of cruelty—excommunicated by the Church of Scotland, as men had been by the Pope, but seldom by any other authority. He has had his revenge in literature, as I have told you, being distinguished as the only romantic and disinterested hero of this dreadful civil war.

There is, however, a painful addition to the history of King Charles, so far as Scotland is concerned. Commissioners were sent to him when he was in Carisbroke, to take up that controversy which he had carried on so lightly in the camp at Newcastle; and to them he gave secretly a promise to take the Covenant, and preserve all the liberties of the Scottish people. Had he taken that vow in Newcastle, he might have marched to Edinburgh in triumph a year before, with all the strength that Scotland could muster raised in his defence; but it was his unfortunate fate to yield too late, even if his sincerity in apparent yielding could have been trusted. This negotiation is called the Engagement in Scotch history. It was the cause of a futile expedition into England in aid of the king, under the command of the Marquis of Hamilton, which came to nothing. The Engagement itself, when discovered, told against Charles as a breach of faith with the English parliament, in whose hands he was, whilst the chief of the Covenanters, and especially the Church in Scotland, were always violently against it. Hamilton's little army was overthrown by Cromwell, the first time, I think, that we find that name in connection with Scotland, who thereupon marched into Scotland unresisted, and was received in Edinburgh, not as an enemy but as an ally, taking the Covenant over again with the great personages there, as if it had been a pledge of amity. It is said that Argyle, who, during all these troubles, had been one of the chief movers, was taken into Cromwell's confidence as to the fate of Charles: but this is a mere conjecture. It was, however, in the end of 1648 that

these conferences were held, and on the 30th of January 1649, King Charles was executed at Whitehall, to the amazement and alarm of the whole civilised world.

CHAPTER XIX

CHARLES II

THE position of Scotland during the struggle between the king and the English parliament had been a memorable one. The Scots had been despised and hated during the previous reign : jeered at as beggars and sycophants getting the promotion and the wealth which ought to have been reserved for their English rivals : they suddenly became the leaders, the saviours, the example and protection of the other kingdom. Their minds, so far as regarded religion, moved more quickly than that of the English ; their decisions were more prompt ; there was an enthusiasm and certainty in their combined movement to which the others had to be wound up by slower degrees ; and, perhaps, the very fact of being a community so much smaller in size and so much more accustomed to hardship, gave to the Scots this advantage that they moved more lightly and with less painful consideration of the consequences. They had at the same time the more clearly apparent advantage of a large number of practised soldiers at their command, the old campaigners of the Thirty Years' Wars, trained to every device of fighting and with the experience gained in innumer-

able conflicts—Scots who had indeed been absent on foreign service most of their lives, but who, with national fidelity, turned homewards at the end of the great war, and were glad to find employment, though no longer against the auld enemy, yet in a superior and protecting position towards that auld enemy become a religious brother, which satisfied the national pride. The English, though so much stronger and richer, did not lead but followed in the battle for the faith. They did not begin the struggle with the divine right of human despotism till after Scotland had shaken herself free of its yoke. This important position did a great deal to content the Scots with their now inevitable position as yoke-fellows with their old enemies. They were proud as well as willing to help, and flattered that in so many points, especially as respects religion, their initiative as well as their example seemed about to be taken.

But the death of Charles at the hands of his subjects made a great difference. Scotland was not perhaps so horror-stricken by the execution of a king as other countries. The universal thrill that ran through Europe did not move her as it had done those brought up to believe in the semi-divinity of the monarch. But she had a steady, if sober, devotion to her own reigning house which she had constantly contended with, yet always loved, and no impulse towards a republic. The first thing done in Edinburgh after the terrible news was received, was to proclaim at the Cross the accession of Charles II. of Great Britain, France and Ireland, king, with a promptitude which meant more than a mere proclamation. It was a

protest of the strongest character, and separation of the Scots people from the cause of the English which they had up to this time upheld. Shortly after commissioners were sent to the young Charles at the Hague, very much unlike the little court of Cavaliers who surrounded him there, consisting of a grim baron or two who had been in all the wars, some burgher magistrates and a minister—homely personages little resembling an embassy sent to a king; yet these men had something tangible to offer, whereas the finer courtiers had nothing but their swords, which could do so little against the parliament, and more or less the people, of England. Baillie, the minister, who had been on all the commissions, who had sat in the Westminster Assembly, and had been amongst the most sanguine as to the union of hearts between the two kingdoms, and the adoption by the English of Presbyterian government, as well as reformed doctrine, had a deep disappointment of his own to bear, as well as that of all his party, in the complete failure of this great hope.

For by this time the Church in general had begun to perceive that though they had accepted much from the English in the way of religious order, the English finally had accepted nothing in return from them. Baillie made a speech to the young king expressing as the feeling in his own heart and that of his people,—‘Our mournful sorrow for that execrable and tragic parricide—that hardly expressible crime which stamps and stigmatises with a new and before unseen character of infamy the face of the whole generation of Sectaries and their adherents, from whose hearts and hands that vilest villainy did proceed.’ Nothing could be stronger

than this condemnation, and it points out the change of feeling in the temper and opinion of Scotland towards their late brothers in arms. They were no longer hopeful friends bound to them by the closest religious union, but Sectaries, whom the unanimous nation loathed, Independents, Congregationalists, Anabaptists, as the Cavaliers themselves delighted to call Cromwell and his party, who had thrown off not only the bonds of Episcopacy but those of Presbytery, the order which the Scots considered divine as the English of former days had considered Episcopal government. There was no longer any possibility of accord with Cromwell and his parliament on this account, even had no other existed. Baillie was both a lively and a truthful recorder of the great public events of his time, in which he took an important share, and we owe to him many of the details of history. He was neither intolerant nor unkindly, any more than his rigid belief demanded; but he was bitter on the subject of the Sectaries, as one of the men so deeply deceived at Westminster had a right to be.

These homely Scotch Commissioners offered Charles the allegiance of the ancient kingdom of his ancestors, but on one condition—that he should accept and swear the Covenant, the national bond, and in addition the great body of doctrine contained in the (Westminster) ‘Directory, Confession of Faith and Catechism,’ all of which they brought to him ‘bound together in a book as handsome as we could get them,’ to bribe him it is supposed, to read and obey. Charles II. was a man very different from his father. He was one who loved pleasure and an easy life, neither serious nor ambitious, nor capable of devotion to any idea. He

would never have overturned heaven and earth for a principle, nor risked his own life or even comfort on so visionary a consideration. For a safe, even if poor, home in Scotland, the State, though scanty, of a King, and the support of a faithful people at his back, and still more such a bulwark as Lesley's army, he was ready with a light heart to sign anything. 'Thirty-nine articles? forty if you like,' was the well-known remark of a notable person of fifty years ago, when requested to sign the Standards of the Church. Charles was ready to subscribe to a hundred confessions of faith; what did it matter how many? he had no intention of keeping one. But it can scarcely be said, when speaking of such a man, that he had any deliberate intention even of breaking his promises. He meant solely to do what suited his own purposes best. Probably, if he had been able to go on in Scotland without disturbance, by that means, he would have acquiesced with good-humoured disdain in whatever happened in the Church, and signed anything that appeared to give stability to his throne. He swallowed them all in the present instance without a murmur. In July 1650, he proceeded to Scotland, where he had to sign once more before he was permitted to land. It seems to have been supposed in those days that the more often a document was signed the more likely it was to be observed.

Charles landed in the far north, but made his way by stages to Falkland, in Fife, where his troubles began. There his retinue was examined by the authorities, who found that it was made up chiefly of Cavaliers, now called Malignants both in Scotland and England by the popular party; it was therefore broken

up, leaving him only with a few attendants, among whom, however, were the king's favourites Buckingham and Rochester, men as gay, as immoral, and as little affected by any point of honour in making a false promise or signing a document as himself. 'They were left, though malignant of the Malignants, and cavalier of the Cavaliers, when men more sincere and honourable were driven away.

With these few, but dangerous, attendants helping him to make a mockery of the engagements he took upon him, Charles went on from castle to castle, making a sort of royal progress through the country, signing every kind of confession and assurance of his own disposition to do well and abjure the sins of those who went before him. One of these in which he was made to thank God for having 'discovered to his majesty the great evil of the ways wherein he had formerly been led by wicked counsel' he hesitated at; but it was immediately imposed upon him in even stronger terms, and he signed, as he signed everything. Such a terrible thralldom forms a kind of excuse for the falsehood which was his only way of escaping from such unjust and cruel demands; for to ask a man to curse his father and mother, and all that was dear to them, even were they the worst people in existence, and those who demanded it the best, must always remain a cruel and wicked thing. You would think perhaps that good people would have asked nothing of the kind; but they were good people, notwithstanding who asked and compelled it—a thing too great for you or any of us to understand, for it is one of the greatest mysteries in human nature.

The people, however, who were now at the head of

affairs in Scotland had none of the wisdom which had been conspicuous in former generations. The ministers had the upper hand in everything. I am not one who is disposed to say a single word against the Church. It has done more good to Scotland than all other agencies put together, and has preserved the character and individuality of the nation more than any other influence in history. But national affairs want large experience and much judgment. A man must know how to endure all things, how to look at a subject from every point of view, and consider everyone's interests when he takes in hand the affairs of State. This is one reason why ignorant men are very unsafe in power, and why those who are accustomed to the laws of a very small community find it very difficult even to understand, still less to administer, a great one in which all sorts of men are included. In those days intolerance was not considered a vice or a weakness as among us, but a high principle and the greatest virtue. If the ruling class in Scotland had been able to have its way, I believe that no rain would have fallen and no sun shone upon the lands of the Malignants, the Engagers, or the Sectaries, though we are all aware that God, who knows so much better than we do, sends down His rain upon both the just and the unjust. It was this which secured for the country the most crushing defeat, and the greatest and most humiliating calamity it had ever known.

When the terrible news came that Cromwell—that dreaded name—Cromwell fresh from his bloody campaign in Ireland—was on his way to Edinburgh, not now as a friend but as a conquerer, the army of the Scots was called together and assembled rapidly in the

accustomed meeting place, the Boroughmuir. Here it occurred to the ministers and other civilians who had charge of all the affairs of Scotland, in spite of the remonstrances of the generals, to 'purge' the forces, which were collected to defend them, from all who were not of their way of thinking. Some four thousand soldiers of indefinite religious principles were in the ranks, many of them trained and experienced, the best in the army, who had joined the colours—some for the sake of the king and their allegiance, some for the sake of the general under whom they had served before, some perhaps for the mere sake of the fighting and the pay, as they had filled up the Swedish ranks under Gustavus Adolphus in a manner which has always been considered legitimate, so long as the men were faithful to their leader. The governors of Scotland, who were not soldiers nor statesmen, turned these men, and everyone who did not serve or pretend to serve for the sake of the Covenant and in the name of religion alone, out of the small Scots force to which every individual sword was of consequence. This was done by good men and with the best intentions; but it was such an act of folly as well as presumption as has rarely been known—folly in casting off the best material of their army, and presumption in taking to themselves the right of judgment which belongs only to the All-seeing. The Scotch leaders thanked God, like the Pharisee, that they themselves were not as other men, even these publicans. But they had at least the courage of their opinions, and strong in their sense of God's special approval, deprived themselves thus of the defenders of whom they were most urgently in need—which was a kind of heroism in its way, since

they thus fatally weakened their army, and doubled all their own chances of the ruin which was so soon to come.

They refused also the bands which various great lords undertook to furnish, on the same ground ; and finally they declined to allow Charles himself to accompany them, for the reason that his father's opposition and his mother's 'idolatry' (she was a Roman Catholic) might bring a curse. The young king was accordingly shut up in Dunfermline, the ancient royal seat of his ancestors. All this time, while the 'purging' and 'purification' went on, Cromwell had been permitted to sweep over the border with no attempt to check his career, and had marched to within six miles of Edinburgh, having got possession of the port of Leith and all the seaboard. While he was marching they were testing and 'purging' their men with a fury of conflicting voices, sermons and addresses, leaving every path into the country undefended. Nor was this all ; when at last they had ended their fatal revision of the ranks, and it might have been expected that the general would have been left free to the exercise of his skill, he was accompanied by a committee formed from the Estates and Church, who demurred at Lesley's tactics and fretted at the judicious and careful delay with which, adopting the usual Scots policy, he hoped to weary his great opponent out. The result was that these ignorant and headstrong men forced on the disastrous battle of Dunbar, which was fought on the 3d September 1650, a great and decisive defeat, which delivered Scotland into Cromwell's hands.

A little longer, however, the conflict endured.

Young King Charles, who had been left almost a prisoner in Dunfermline, was evidently by this time so weary of his life, and of the continual sermons and admonitions addressed to him, that he took the opportunity of escaping while the fate of the country hung in the balance, and was found far away in Athole, wandering among the moors, apparently with the intention of throwing himself upon the loyalty of the Highland clans as his great-nephew and namesake did nearly a hundred years after. He was found however, and brought back to Scone, the spot so long sacred to the coronation of the Scots kings, but now lying in practical ruin, where he was hastily crowned, a ceremony which there never yet had been time to perform. Then, with much preaching and recrimination, and attempts to prove that the misfortune at Dunbar was caused by the displeasure of the Lord, because, in spite of all their precautions, there had still lurked a few Malignants in their camp, another army was raised, which finally, Cromwell having crossed the Forth and got out of their way, marched, carrying Charles with them, according to their old national tactics, into England, and pushed as far as Worcester, where the Cavaliers were preparing for a last stand. How they reconciled themselves to fighting side by side with the Malignants there, when they thought it so fatal at home, it is impossible to tell; and it was indeed a bitter irony of fate, which accomplished the ruin of the army of the Scots, so purged and purified, in the battle which was the dying effort of the loyalist party, and by the side of those who had always been their enemies.

Charles who had marched at their head and showed

himself not unworthy of his name, fled when the result became apparent, and David Lesley, the general of the Scots army, was one of those who were taken prisoner. And thus the Scotch struggle, as well as the English, against the all-conquering Cromwell was brought to a conclusion. Scotland had begun the struggle against the king, whose attempts to enforce his will against the convictions and dearest wishes of the people had been intolerable to them. Scotland now had her share in the ending of it, in the interest and under the standard of the royalty to which the ancient kingdom stood faithfully, discontented though she might be with the wearer of the crown.

For eight years after, from 1651 to 1659, Scotland lay silent and humbled under the iron hand of the Protector. Cromwell and his officials showed little mercy to Church or preacher any more than to nobles and Cavaliers. The ministers, who had done harm enough, and contributed much to their own overthrow, came together, notwithstanding, fearing no interference, to hold the great court of the Church in May 1653 : but were turned out of Edinburgh in a mass, at three days' notice, the General Assembly forcibly closed as no king had yet been able to do, and all the strife of tongues and quarrels among themselves, which at the moment was very hot, silenced. There was no man of commanding genius or power like Knox or Melville, or even Henderson, in the Church at this melancholy moment to inspire the brethren or confront the invader, and perhaps this had something to do with the complete collapse that followed. In other matters, the overthrow was not less. Monk, who was Cromwell's general in Scotland, crushed the only attempt

that was made to maintain the cause of the king in the Highlands, which, as it was a weak and foolish attempt, commanding no general sympathy, it was not difficult to do. It is not a pleasant moment to look back upon.

But though the public life of the country was thus crushed and silenced, even the last refuge of Scots nationality, the Parliament of the Church, being made an end of for the moment—yet peace, even when it is an iron peace, compulsory, and bringing humiliation with it, cannot but be good in some ways for a country which has to be fed and clothed, and do something for its living, however kings may rise and fall, or public assemblies be deposed or armies disbanded. The administration of Cromwell was neither tyrannical nor unjust. We are told that the Scots laws, which had been praised by the great Bacon as ‘of admirable brevity,’ became now wordy and confused and long-winded, as they still remain—probably because of the glossaries and explanations added for the use of the English judges: but they were steadily and justly administered, which, after all, is the great matter. And trade began to spring up here and there; there were no longer any duties on Scotch produce going into England, or English produce coming into Scotland, such as had existed before: and the result of this was much increase of business and prosperity. The shipping, up to this time very small, flourished and grew in security: there was a regular post between Scotland and England: and notwithstanding the chill upon all national effort, and contradiction of everything characteristic and specially endeared to the country, an evident increase in general comfort and prosperity.

We are told on all sides of the great poverty of Scotland, a statement not to be opposed in a general sense. Nevertheless, as I have pointed out to you in former periods, as soon as we have a fair account of common affairs from any impartial traveller, we find among our forefathers a wonderful amount of comfort as it was understood at the time—namely, warmth, and food, and shelter and substantial clothing, which are the first elements of well being. And even money, never plentiful, began to increase, for the race was strong and healthful and energetic, and peace, even though unkindly, developed their native powers. Cromwell, whose taxation was very severe, secured an imposition of £10,000 a month from the pockets of the people, which seems almost miraculous; but the time of his power was not long.

CHAPTER XX

THE PERSECUTIONS

IT was from Scotland that General Monk, the greatest after Cromwell among the generals of the Republic, set out on his march some time after the Lord Protector's death, November 1659, to restore the king, of which you will read in the history of England. Scotland, which had fought for Charles as long as it was possible to fight, without ever trusting or believing in him, awoke to new hope, and accompanied the English general, who had ruled her with military severity, with a universal stir of interest and joy, divining, as was done throughout both kingdoms, what his object was—to bring back the king. Scotland had never been republican, and England, which had only veered that way under the influence of one masterful and powerful mind, returned with a spring of satisfaction to the old law of being, as soon as that presence was withdrawn. The joy which intoxicated both nations is indeed wonderful, considering how short a time it was since the dreadful struggle ended, and how clearly every step in the conflict which had brought Charles I. to the block, and Oliver Cromwell to absolute power, must have been remembered by the

majority of the people ; for the Commonwealth, as it was called under Cromwell, only lasted eleven years. But his reign had been a stern one, and there can be no doubt that the relief was great, when a still young and magnificent king, with the gayest of courts around him, and nothing but revelry and enjoyment in his thoughts, came home again in triumph—to make everybody happy except the Puritans, who had had their day and had to yield to better men—as the multitude believed, which always likes to see this kind of overturn, and what is called poetical justice—those that were uppermost coming down, and those who had been humbled brought to the front again.

The joy in Scotland especially was intense. Had they but known what was before them in the reign of disaster that was about to begin, the feelings of the people must have been very different ; but nothing probably would have made them believe in it, and the relief with which they felt that hard yoke of the ‘Sectaries’ taken off their shoulders, and their independent action restored, was too great for description. There is an account of the rejoicings in Edinburgh, which is more like the uproarious half madness of the old carnival in an Italian city than anything that could take place in a staid and serious Presbyterian capital. The Church, however, had its misgivings, and with good reason : for the only strong feeling which the gay and easy-tempered king seems to have brought back with him, was one of determined hostility to that party which had so tormented him in Scotland, and whose continual preachings, and the endless vows they imposed upon him, had embittered his mind more than any other humiliation of his life. He was not bitter

by nature, and I doubt if he cared very much either for bishop or presbyter; but the Scots Church he could not forgive. One portion of it composed a memorial to him, begging him to preserve their ecclesiastical constitution, and to take steps to procure uniformity of worship and faith (that is, on the model of their own) throughout his realms; but their hearts failed them, and they did not send it. The other party, the most tolerant, though neither were tolerant—the party which believed that a man might be a good soldier, and fight well, even if he did not take the Covenant—sent a commissioner, James Sharp by name, to plead their cause, and get a pledge if possible from Charles, securing them in their churches. ‘You are to use your utmost endeavours that the Kirk * of Scotland may, without interruption or encroachment, enjoy the freedom and privileges of her established judicatories ratified by the laws of the land’ (which meant her courts, her synods, her general assemblies), was the commission given to the Church’s representative. Sharp was moderate, but yet zealous. He was surprised and distressed to find that in London there was little of that desire for uniformity which had been so strong in the days of the Westminster Assembly, and to promote which the Scots had accepted the Confession of Faith, Directory and Catechism of that body. ‘I pray the Lord keep them from the service book and prelacy,’ he says, piously. But after a while Sharp’s convictions began

* It is supposed by many that the Kirk means the Presbyterian Church of Scotland alone, and was only used after the Reformation. This, however, is a mistake, the Kirk being identical with the Church. In the old days, when Scotland was a Catholic kingdom, and the Church faithful to Rome, she was the Kirk as much as in later times.

to yield. He saw first that uniformity was a vain hope, and a Covenanting and Presbyterian England one of those 'devout imaginations' at which wise statesmen jeered. He represented to his clients in Scotland that 'a moderate Episcopacy,' which would really be no more than an 'effectual Presbytery,' was the best that was to be hoped for in England, although Scotland might still be free to follow the better way. How he was brought round to throw himself into the effort about to be made to secure uniformity in the contrary way, by restoring Episcopacy in Scotland, no one knows ; but he returned to his betrayed brethren in the end of 1660, prepared to acquiesce in the complete revolution of ecclesiastical affairs, and with the mitre of Archbishop of St Andrews and Primate of Scotland at his command.

The Church had now no army to defend her, no weighty Estates of the realm at her back, no great and influential ruler within her own breast. The temper of her ministers had grown bitter, and their views rigid by continual discussion and disorder, and by the deprivation of all the usual public methods of speaking their minds, which Cromwell had silenced more effectually than any king before him. They were less imposing in character, and had fewer notable men to guide them, than, perhaps, at any other period; and wisdom and unity of purpose had been for a long time absent from their counsels. This is not to say, however, that there were not many learned and highly-cultivated men among their ranks. It would be difficult now to find, either in England or Scotland, men so well acquainted with the progress of thought, or even personally with the theologians and philosophers

of the Continental universities, as some of these persecuted ministers. But they were now on the eve of the most terrible passage in the history of the Reformed Church in Scotland, and no man of sufficient force or character or power of mind to act as their leader was called forth by this great emergency; he who was their standard-bearer, the man whom they had specially commissioned to maintain their rights, was returning to them with the enemy's commission in his pocket, and their fate already decided in his heart.

The Estates met in the beginning of 1661. The Lord High Commissioner, appointed by Charles to be his representative as the President of the Parliament, was not a great Scots noble, as had been usual, but a soldier of fortune, called Middleton, created Lord Middleton for the purpose, who had once commanded the forces of the Covenanters against Montrose, and who had all the bitterness of the renegade in his heart. The Estates had not yet recovered their almost insane joy over the restoration, and were ready to do whatever they were told. Almost their sole business was to pass what is called with the usual Scotch pleasure in an effective title, the Rescissory Act, by which all the measures enacted by the Scots parliaments since the beginning of the civil wars, including, of course, the settlement of the Church were peremptorily rescinded and swept from the statute books. By these acts the Covenant had been made the law of the land; the Presbyterian Church, with all its courts, had been established, and Episcopacy abolished. They were now swept away at one stroke as by a magician's wand. Things were thus restored to the position in

which they had been at the beginning of the reign of Charles I., or rather one which was much harder for the Presbyterians, since at that time the few remaining bishops had been cautious and timid, feeling themselves to exist on sufferance, whereas the newly-appointed prelates were full of zeal, and conscious of power at their back.

After this sweeping legislation came a hurry of events, which took away every man's breath: the Covenant which all, or almost all, the notable persons in Scotland had taken, was burnt at the Cross of Edinburgh by the hangman, to the consternation of the country. The Marquis of Argyle, one of the greatest local princes of Scotland, combining the character of a feudal noble and a Highland chief, he who had crowned Charles II. at Scone, and rivalled and overpowered Montrose, was brought to the scaffold, and, along with him, a number of other very considerable men. Last of all the ministers throughout Scotland, who had not been ordained by bishops, or placed in their livings by patrons, were called upon either to qualify themselves by re-ordination and appointment, or to leave their parishes. The clergy in the north, who had always been disposed towards Episcopacy, remained, but in the west and south there was almost a universal abandonment of the churches, three hundred and fifty 'coming out,' according to a phrase used in later days. This produced, as may be supposed, an immense commotion throughout the country, far more than anything taking place at the centre of affairs could have done. Every parish was thus made a centre of revolt against so cruel a law. The places of the banished clergy

were hastily filled up by unprepared youths and ignorant men called curates, and the people would have none of these intruders. They followed their ministers to such meeting places as could be found, often to the hillsides and retired nooks among the glens, pursued there by the government with heavy fines and confiscations. Presently these grew into imprisonments, attacks upon the houses of the 'disaffected,' as they were called, and even upon the lives of the peaceful peasants and humble folks who followed their preachers wherever they went. This state of affairs was especially bitter in the west of Scotland, where the country people were almost all Whigs, popularly Whigamores—holding the Covenant as dear as the Gospel, and driven every day into more determined opposition by the severities to which they were exposed.

You will read in England of a similar occurrence on a much larger scale which happened about the same time, when two thousand ministers were driven out of the Church by the Act of Uniformity; but that called forth no bloody or disastrous struggle. England conformed quietly with scarcely any public tumult. The two thousand melted away into little communities of dissenters, each taking their own way, or were absorbed back again into common life. But in Scotland the passion grew on both sides, Middleton growing ferocious—he and his Privy Council, a new and secret court which carried out all his projects, and, no doubt, was formed in great part of renegades like himself. When Middleton fell into disfavour with the king, as happened after a while, he was recalled, and the Earl of Lauderdale, who, at least,

was a great Scots nobleman, was put in his place, with milder intentions and professions at first; but to moderate the fury of such a struggle is not an easy thing. The Covenanters, driven to despair, took to the hills, multiplying their secret services in wild moorland nooks and glens, among the grey slopes of the Lammermoors, throughout Ayrshire and the wilds of Galloway and Dumfries. At first shot down without resistance, they began after a while individually to defend themselves as best they could: then, in their desperation, rose, in wild and hopeless bands of insurrection, without officers or organisation. There was no man holding the old and cherished form of the national religion who was not liable to be shot down at his own door if he refused to renounce the Covenant, or to be dragged to Edinburgh and hanged without trial or pretence of justice. When English spectators, imperfect as their knowledge was, began to perceive what was going on, there was an outcry and wondering protest, under the influence of which Lauderdale was withdrawn, and the Duke of York, the king's brother and heir, was sent in his stead with a momentary relaxation of the persecution. This was chiefly marked by a measure called the Indulgence, by which certain ministers, willing to accept a compromise, were permitted to return to their churches and resume their former position, under sufferance, by reasons of various compliances which were not popular with either side. These indulged ministers became almost more obnoxious to the Covenanters than even the persecutors themselves. There is nothing that Scotland likes so little as a compromise.

Thus the golden era of the Restoration was turned

into a reign of fire and blood, the most cruel that has ever passed over Scotland. The country had suffered almost to the death in previous ages by disastrous wars; but these had been struggles for independence and national freedom, in which all had fought together and borne their misfortunes cheerfully. But the persecution had nothing in it that was not bitter. Tortures as terrible as those of the Inquisition, and continual executions by some form of law at least, were scarcely so terrible as the raids of the brutal troopers of the king's Horse Guards, mercenary soldiers, little known in Scotland and deeply abhorred, to whom nothing was sacred, and to whom it was a small matter to plunder the house and insult the women, and leave the goodman dead on his own hearth. There are some names, such as those of Lauderdale, Claverhouse, Dalziel (bloody D'yell as they called him), Grierson of Lag, and others, which have been burnt in as by a red-hot iron on the heart of the people, and excite almost as hot and bitter indignation now as when these deeds of blood were done. Sir Walter Scott has done his best to clear Claverhouse, but with less than his usual force, for after all, the fact that a man is a very fine gentleman, with some imagination and refinement of sentiment, does not justify him in acting the part of an executioner, and murdering, or causing to be murdered, a peasant patriarch at his own door.

There is a wonderful picture of the time in Sir Walter's novel of *Old Mortality*, in which the Covenanters are very severely handled, and an account given of them which can scarcely be called just. Yet perhaps, as the dreadful years rolled on, as the

milder men dropped off into any shelter they could find, and the stronger were executed and imprisoned, it is scarcely to be wondered at if the maddened peasants of the west, with no hope for this life, and no security for a day, grew more and more unlovely in their fanaticism, in their curses of their persecutors, and the fiery passion that consumed their lives. But the fault was greatly with those who drove them into frenzy and shed their blood like water. The Covenanters, or, at least, a small party of them, under John Balfour, cruelly murdered Archbishop Sharp on Magus Moor, in Fife, who deserved such a fate much better than many other victims : though his murderers were as guilty in taking his life as were the murderers of the 'Christian Carrier,' or any other humble martyr. But where Balfour of Burley and his companions killed one, the persecutors killed hundreds ; and it is hard to preserve a perfect balance of justice among such overwhelming disorders, where there is nothing on any side but cruelty and blood.

This terrible period lasted from 1661 to 1688, a period of more than twenty-five years, during which, with intervals, the Persecutions, as they are called in Scotch history, went on. When Charles II. died, and his brother, James VII., came to the throne in 1685, there was a short and unsuccessful rising in Scotland, corresponding with the rebellion of Monmouth in England. The unfortunate Monmouth had been sent to Scotland in 1679, and had commanded the king's forces against the Covenanters at the decisive battle of Bothwell Bridge, one of the last desperate attempts of the Covenanters at actual warfare ; but he had acted afterwards with so much less cruelty than usual,

showing a disposition towards mercy with which they were quite unacquainted, that a certain tenderness was felt for his name. The Earl of Argyle and several other personages of importance had been drawn into the English plots that arose in the end of Charles II.'s life, when the dread of a Catholic reign, and all the cruelties that were expected to follow, had excited the minds of many in England, some of them of the highest character—Lord Russell, Algernon Sidney, Shaftesbury and others, at their head. Many Scots gentlemen, among others Baillie of Jerviswood, whose despair at the state of affairs in Scotland had made him, with many of his friends, resolve on emigration as the only means of escape—were persuaded to join them: but their attempt at insurrection came to nothing except the execution of many illustrious men in both countries. Afterwards, when James came to the throne, and the terror and exasperation of the ultra-Protestant party rose to actual insurrection under the Duke of Monmouth, Argyle and some other banished lords prepared an expedition in Scotland in concert with them. We are told that it was very badly managed, and marked by contentions and controversies all through, which is a thing fatal to every undertaking, but doubly so in war, when one strong will is the only safe guide. Monmouth's rebellion in England came to a disastrous end, though not from the same causes; and the corresponding outbreak in Scotland was still more easily overcome—Argyle taken and executed with every circumstance of cruelty, and the other leaders who escaped this doom scattering on every side.

Another of the leaders of this unfortunate expedition

was Sir Patrick Home, of Polwarth, who was afterwards made Earl of Marchmont; and to make you forget the horrors of the 'Killing Time,' as it was called, I must tell you the delightful story of how he escaped. It is the story of a little girl, and should always be pleasant to children. It has been one of my favourite stories all my life.

Sir Patrick escaped from the rout of his expedition, and made his way through every kind of danger to the neighbourhood of his own home, which was the castle of Redbraes, in Berwickshire: where he took refuge in his family burying-place, a vault under the parish church. There he lived in complete darkness among the coffins of his fathers, his only comfort being the nightly visits of his little daughter Grizel, twelve years old, who brought him food for the twenty-four hours, and news of all that was going on above ground. To get this food was of itself no small matter of difficulty, for Lady Polwarth dared not set aside a portion, or let anyone know that there was an unseen person to be fed; for there were many children in the family, and any one of these little things might have betrayed in ignorance that dangerous fact; or the servants, not always to be trusted, would certainly have found it out. Grizel was the one to find a way out of this trouble. She pretended to have a prodigious appetite, and ate so much that her little brothers complained of her. 'Look at Grizel, mother,' said little Sandy, 'while we have been supping our broth, she has eaten up the sheep's head.' What Grizel had done was to slip the sheep's head into her lap for her father's dinner. She was dreadfully frightened to cross the churchyard in the dark, and

to go down among the tombs, groping her way : but she did it valiantly, and never grumbled, making Sir Patrick laugh over the story of Sandy and the sheep's head, keeping up the spirits of the fugitive.

Afterwards he was brought into the house, where Lady Polwarth and her daughter made a hole beneath what was called a box bed—one of the beds fixed in recesses in the wall, which still exist in some places in Scotland — and placed a mattress there, covering it over with a lid, so that on any alarm he might lie hidden in this place. Grizel's nails were almost torn off her fingers by this dreadful piece of work, but she was very thankful of anything, as you may suppose, which would secure a little comfort for her father, and also save herself from stumbling through the dark churchyard in the depth of the night. While Sir Patrick lay among the tombs during those dreadful days, his only solace was to repeat the Psalms, as translated by George Buchanan into Latin (and very fine Latin), many of which he knew by heart. Finally he escaped to Holland, where he became one of the intimate counsellors of the Prince of Orange. Before her attendance upon her father in the churchyard, Grizel had been sent on a secret commission to Baillie of Jerviswood, the leader of the previous rising, called the Jerviswood plot, of which I have just told you, while he lay in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh before his execution, and brought back his last message and instructions at the risk of her life through the disturbed country. She was but a child when she fulfilled these noble offices for the sake of her parents and her country. It takes a great deal to crush a country which has children like this.

Nevertheless, Scotland was as well-nigh crushed as it is possible for any country to be and yet live, when James VII. came to the throne in 1685. But though things were at their very worst at that time, there soon followed a slight amelioration, not from any loving-kindness on his part, but because he was anxious to unloose the bonds of his own brethren, the Roman Catholics, and the only possible way to do so was to relax the rigour of the persecution generally. The Presbyterians in Scotland and the Dissenters in England alike saw through this attempt and rejected it; for they were both of opinion that, however well it might be to be liberated themselves, they would rather continue to suffer than help to secure the same liberty to Papists. Indeed, they abhorred toleration, even though they suffered so deeply from its absence; they would rather have gone on bearing every conceivable torture than have permitted the king's chapel to be decorated for the services which were dear to him, or a single mass to be said.

When James's brief reign was coming to an end, however, the government had too much in hand, and was occupied with too many cares to take the same trouble about the Scots, and those who had been in hiding gradually began to come forth, the churches to be reoccupied by their old ministers, and quietness, full of whispers of a new era and new hopes, to steal over the land. The next heir to the throne after James, who at that time had no son, was his elder daughter Mary, who was married to William, Prince of Orange, the head of the Protestant party on the Continent, and a man of great force of character and influence. For some time the eyes both of England

and Scotland had been turning towards him as to their chief hope. James had not been a tyrant and persecutor in England as he had been in Scotland, but he was very unpopular, and the fact that he was a Roman Catholic filled the country with dismay. This increased daily as he began to take bolder steps for the introduction of the Roman form of worship, and to assert his own divine right to change the constitution of the country if he pleased—steps which alienated England from him in the most remarkable and complete way. The previous terrible arrest of the Stewart dynasty by the execution of Charles I. was scarcely so extraordinary as the manner in which, after all that had passed between, and the joy with which the royal family had been received back again, England abandoned and slid away from James, transferring its allegiance to his daughter's husband almost in a moment, with a swiftness and silence that looked almost like a scene in a theatre. Scotland was different ; her last drop of blood had been wrung out of her, her little wealth expended in fines and penalties, her patience exhausted, her spirit broken, and, what was almost worse, her temper ruined for the time. Persecutions had made the last remnant of the Covenanters mad, and even the most sober part of the nation had not a shred of confidence in the king, or disposition to believe in his promises. Already a number of refugees had found shelter in the congenial atmosphere of Holland, in the midst of a tried Protestantism like their own ; and William of Orange had become to Scotland, still more distinctly than to England, the one possible deliverer. He was not uncongenial to the Scots, which he was to the English, and though

they were too far off from the scene of action to desert to his standard as soon as he landed, as the English noblemen and great personages did, many of their own exiles returned with him, and his triumph meant to them a new era of prosperity, stability and peace.

CHAPTER XXI

WILLIAM AND MARY

THERE is nothing, however, that can be less reckoned upon than the unanimity of a country in face of such a great change as that which was about to take place in the Island of Great Britain. With the English, who had suffered but little, the Revolution was a great political event, and left the general heart of the country little affected; but in Scotland it was a matter of life and death, affecting every class, the humblest as well as the highest. Great misfortune, too, is a thing very difficult to reckon with, and it is impossible to predict what its effect may be on any community. It is the commonest of things to say that friends and courtiers forsake a ruined man, and that the cold shade of adversity separates from us those of whose affections we thought ourselves most sure. But there are two sides to this question; and misfortune is as great an attraction to some as it is repulsive to others. James was no sooner overwhelmed and a fugitive, than many silent partisans, who could not sanction his cruelties, sprang up in favour of his rights. Graham of Claverhouse, by one of the many transformations of Scotch history, had by this time changed his name, and as it

would almost seem his character ; and from this time appears no longer as the bloody Clavers of the Covenanters, the merciless persecutor, cutting down unarmed peasants, and carrying fire and sword wherever he went—but as the chivalrous and able general, Viscount Dundee, a second Montrose, maintaining a desperate stand for his king, and gaining a reputation in poetry and romance, which he had but little time to earn, and which is probably more due to the always pathetic circumstance of his death in the moment of victory, than to any actual achievement.

We are told that Dundee made what efforts he could to induce James to make a stand against the Prince of Orange, or, at least, to retire into Scotland and place himself at the head of his many adherents there, especially in the unpersecuted north and among the Highland clans. But this proving vain, Dundee himself retired to his native country, and set up the royal standard. He could do nothing in Edinburgh, where everything was in the hands of the party which had suffered so deeply, and where the streets were crowded with the wild Whigs of the west, the relics and spectators of many a desperate tragedy. It is extraordinary even that he should have trusted himself among a population so full of resentment, and which had now the power in its hands ; but great courage is an imposing quality, and he was daring to the point of bravado, climbing the Castle rock on the precipitous western side, in order to encourage the Catholic Duke of Gordon, who still held it in King James's name, to hold out—and afterwards riding forth from the city, leisurely and calm, through crowds with many a recollection of cruelty against him. In the north

he collected a considerable army, consisting chiefly, of course, of the inevitable Highlanders, so irresistible for a sudden rush, so difficult to form into a regular army, and with them confronted General Mackay, the head of the forces despatched by William to Scotland—English and Dutch regular soldiers, who had been reinforced by many Scots from the Lowlands. This army, Dundee, with again something like bravado, permitted to advance through the Pass of Killiecrankie, where he might easily have cut it to pieces, and meeting it at the opening towards Blair Castle, defeated it with great loss. What this victory might have done for James, it is impossible now to say. It might have turned the tide of fortune altogether, and begun what, at least, would have been a long and deadly struggle ; but in the moment of victory Dundee was killed, and all hope was over for the king.

The battle of Killiecrankie was fought on the 27th June 1689, and this was the virtual conclusion though there was still a little fighting afterwards—of James's hopes in Scotland. The Lowland gentlemen who had joined Dundee were allowed to depart in a body, nearly a hundred and fifty of them to France, where they received from their old monarch, for whom they had sacrificed everything, all that it was in his power to give—a kind audience and his hand to kiss—and ended by taking service in the French army, a little band of heroes, with no more than the position and pay of private soldiers, no longer like the splendid Scots Guard of earlier times of whom you read in *Quentin Durward*, but reduced to the last poverty, and without even a distinctive name. These gallant exiles appear for the last time in history in a wonderful

feat of valour, which Professor Aytoun made the subject of one of his lays, 'The Isle of Scots.' In the middle of the Rhine stood a fortified island held by five hundred Germans. Our men, as you know, were but a hundred and fifty to begin with. They volunteered to take this island, and drive out its garrison. Their attack was made by night, when they waded into the great stream, which has a volume and force of tide equalled by none of our rivers, and tying their ammunition round their necks to keep it dry, linked themselves arm in arm and forded the river. It reached to their breasts before they gained the shore of the island, but once there they drove forth the Germans in their surprise and panic with great loss, and gained the point triumphantly. The isle got the name of the Isle of Scots, but the valiant band are no more seen in history. There were but sixteen of them surviving at the peace of Ryswick years after.

The most important question, however, was to settle the affairs of the Church, which, after its long humiliation and suffering, now raised its head in full expectation of the accomplishment of all its desires, and a good reward for its long endurance and many miseries. It was now more determinedly anti-prelatic and vehemently opposed to any service book than ever, having thrown aside that which was its own, and lost all pretence to any form or ritual during the long struggle which began in St Giles's in the year 1638, fifty years before. Then, as always, there were two parties within the Church itself, one moderate, a term which has become one of reproach in Scotland, though its just meaning is not so; the other answer-

ing to the High Church in England, though very different, or perhaps more closely to the pretensions of Rome, though nothing could have been more offensive to the 'Wild Whigs,' than to have called it so. The great battle of the Roman Church in the Middle Ages, fought out through centuries of tumult and bloodshed, was that the Church herself, through her officials, and especially through the Pope, the representative of Christ, who was the only head of the Church, should make all appointments within her ranks; appointments made according to ecclesiastical law by popular election, as in the case of the bishops who were elected by the chapter, and the abbots of convents by the community over which they were to rule. The great Popes struggled to the death for this principle against a succession of Emperors, who, on their side, considered that the right to appoint those great functionaries, who were often as powerful as feudal princes, lay with them. In the Presbyterian Church there were no great functionaries, but the ministers of the highflying party were as sure that the headship of Christ was best represented by the election of the people, and that every parish should choose its own pastor, as Pope Gregory VII. and Pope Innocent III. were—and fought for it as resolutely. They were of opinion that the Middle Ages were dark ages, and the Popes Anti-Christ; but yet the chief point of their contention was exactly the same.

It was a terrible blow to this party that the system of lay patronage, by which the great proprietors, the old feudal lords of a district, appointed the ministers, should be preserved under the new settlement. I do

not suppose any party liked it, though some of the Moderate side considered it a safe principle, and one more likely to secure men of education and some learning for the service of the Church than the system of popular election. But at all events it was part of the scheme as determined on by King William's government, and which they were compelled to accept. They attained, however, to the distinct acknowledgment of Presbyterian government as the law of the Church, the Confession of Faith and Directory of Public Worship of the Westminster Assembly as its standards, and full freedom for its Church courts; in short, the established and lawful possession of those rights to worship and rule itself according to its own laws and ordinances, for which it had fought so gallantly and so long. These conditions were accepted cheerfully enough by the great majority of the people, though the 'wildest' of the 'Whigs' still held out dissatisfied, and remained apart in distant nooks and corners, dissenters as we should say now, though they vehemently claimed the right of representing the true Kirk, and considered the rest of the Church and nation rather as dissenters from them.

It may be here remarked that the institution, or rather preservation, of lay patronage has remained the great stumbling block of the Church of Scotland, and was the cause of every secession from her ranks, until it was finally repealed in our own time. England, on the other hand, has always submitted to this with perfect composure; the Church of Rome and the Church of Scotland never.

Another great thing attempted by the Revolution

government, that is, by King William, was a pacification of the Highlands, such as it was hoped would be more permanent and effectual than the many attempts of the same kind before. It was hoped at first that the chiefs of the clans would undertake to keep under arms and ready for service when required, a certain number of their men, on consideration of the distribution among them of a large sum of money. They had no objection to the money, which was an article very rare on the other side of the Highland line ; but the commissioners appointed to carry out this scheme soon perceived, in respect to the men, that it would be impracticable, and it was reported that the chief of these commissioners, the Earl of Breadalbane, was well disposed to retain as much as possible of the money in his own hands. The government, however, proclaimed an indemnity to as many of the chiefs as would, before a certain period, submit to the new order of affairs, the penalty if they refused being the last extremities of fire and sword. The authorities in Edinburgh, and especially the Secretary of State, Sir John Dalrymple—the Master of Stair as he was called, being the eldest son of the Earl of Stair—had been much irritated by the Highlanders, who, according to the popular idea in Scotland, were as shifty in negotiation as they were straightforward in fight, and longed to make an example of one clan at least, to show the others what it was to play with so strong a new government : and from thence arose one of the greatest and most terrible tragedies of the time.

One branch of the great Macdonald clan, the Macdonalds of Glencoe, a wild valley in the north-west,

splendid in seeming, but poor and bare for the purposes of living, gave them the opportunity which they desired. The chief held out long, until the last moment, indeed, before he would make his submission: and when he made up his mind, at last, just in time, several unforeseen accidents came in his way to delay him. He went, for instance, to the wrong person by a most unfortunate chance, and then had a toilsome winter journey to make before he reached the official qualified to receive it. The legal limit of the law was overpast before he could give in his adhesion; and though his position was understood and sympathised with, it left him formally open to the penalties denounced against defaulters. In view of this possibility, Stair had made all his arrangements, which were those of a malignant devil rather than a man. He sent a party of Campbells, neighbours and hereditary enemies of the Macdonalds, to Glencoe, on pretence of resting on their way to Fort William, which they did for a fortnight in full friendship with their Highland hosts. The Macdonalds, alarmed at first and ready to defend themselves, were completely deceived by the manners of the Campbells, and used every means of entertaining their guests.

In February 1692, the last Macdonald having given in his submission a month previously, a dreadful order came from headquarters to the captain of this band, Campbell of Glenlyon: and on the 13th of that month, at four o'clock in the morning, in the depth and darkness of the winter night, the whole community being in bed and asleep, the soldiers rose, and fell on their unsuspecting victims. Their orders were 'to put all to the sword under seventy,' and they

carried them out without even regarding that one restriction. It is amazing that men could have been found to do it; but clan hatreds still ran strong. Perhaps even then the mens' hearts misgave them: for only thirty-eight in all were slaughtered, the rest, in the awful tumult that must have arisen in that silent valley in the dead of night, escaping somehow into the desperate wilderness of snowy peaks and wild glens which surrounded with a blacker darkness their blazing village. This is what was called the Massacre of Glencoe. King William signed and counter-signed the order for it, but it has been charitably supposed that he did not know all it meant. Stair, who was immediately responsible, bore the shame and scorn of his countrymen all his life, but met with no punishment. Nobody, it appears, was punished for this most shameful and terrible deed of blood. The age was, perhaps, too well accustomed to bloodshed to be impressed by it as we are; and it must be remembered that, to the greater part of Scotland, the Highlanders were a standing danger, and the always ready instruments of tyranny and mischief. In Galloway and Ayrshire, the wild Whigs had been massacred piecemeal but a very short time before, though never, perhaps, by such an elaborate and horrible plan. It proves that the Saviour of society was not so much better than the tyrant as we have been taught to believe, and that the one side had as vile instruments and as inhuman motives as the other, which is a lamentable thing to acknowledge.

A second event of the greatest importance in the history of Scotland, still more discreditable to King William, and, what is worse, to the English parlia-

ment and nation, occurred shortly after. There was at this time about the world a man of singular genius in respect to commerce and trade, one of a class which arises from time to time, as remarkable and unlike other men in their way as if they were born poets—William Paterson, the founder of the Bank of England. He had been a great traveller as well as speculator, and had been much struck in his wanderings by the position of the Isthmus of Darien, which connects North and South America, and which, if ever a canal could be cut through it, as has been lately attempted, would make a revolution in the trade of the world. Canals had not yet been thought of in those days, but it seemed to Paterson that to plant a colony at this spot, with command of the narrow slip of land not more than a day's journey between the two oceans, the Atlantic on one side and the Pacific on the other, would be the greatest and most profitable work that could be attempted. It was, or so he believed, no man's land, a sort of debatable territory never claimed by Spain, and occupied only by Indians. Paterson's idea was looked on coldly at first by the Dutch to whom he proposed it. He then brought his plans to London, but when there was persuaded by a distinguished countryman, Fletcher of Saltoun, to carry them to Scotland first and secure the profit and advantage for his own country. He did so, and Scotland took fire at the thought. It was, no doubt, a relief to the public mind, still sore with old wounds, and to which the Massacre of Glencoe had given a most painful shock and sense of insecurity, after the high hopes raised by the Revolution. A new sensation is sometimes as desirable for a nation as for an individual,

and there was something in this that appealed to many characteristic sentiments in the Scots. The entire country flung itself into this new excitement, and subscribed almost every penny it possessed to the Darien scheme. Stair, thankful, no doubt, for anything that could make his countrymen forget Glencoe, worked with a will to procure an act of parliament granting a charter from the crown to a new joint-stock company (a recent institution which had very much taken the fancy of the world), to be called the Scots Company trading to Africa and the Indies. It was the Scots parliament, I need not say, which passed this act, the two kingdoms being then independent of each other. By this time, the project began to excite attention in the great existing centres of trade. The London merchants wished for a share in it, and subscribed for three hundred thousand pounds of stock or shares in the company. In Hamburg and Holland, two hundred thousand pounds were subscribed, and all Scotland, in a joyful ferment of activity and hope, began to make its preparations for the first start.

This was in the year 1695, just two hundred years ago, seven years after the Revolution. I have reminded you that there were then two parliaments, one in Scotland and one in England, and that they were still two independent nations, though under one king. Their trade was distinct, their interests, as was thought, distinct, and anything that increased the importance of the one was supposed to be a drawback to the other. But this is not quite a just statement of the case. I never heard that the Scots considered the prosperity of England a grievance to them, perhaps because England had always been so much the richer of the two that

any feeling of rivalry on that point would have been ridiculous; but the English were bitterly jealous of the Scots, which is a strange consequence of being better off, yet certainly was the case in this instance. The English parliament took up this Darien scheme in a spirit of the bitterest opposition. They addressed the king on the subject, declaring that this new company would injure their own, the East India Company recently formed, and that a great deal of trade would be transferred to Scotland to the injury of England. William replied in a corresponding tone, and dismissed Stair from office, he who had massacred the Macdonalds without a word of reproof, for the offence of having attempted to promote his country's interests. The English Parliament proceeded to forbid the London merchants to continue their subscription to the Scots Company, and King William himself remonstrated with Hamburg and Holland. All these supporters were thus withdrawn from the undertaking, for though the Hamburgers were independent enough to refuse at first, they soon bethought themselves that the opposition of England was enough to ruin the most promising of schemes. And if Scotland had been wise she would have withdrawn also from a scheme so bitterly opposed by her powerful neighbour, who had so much power to harm her; but the blood of Scotland was up, and a fierce determination to succeed by herself unaided took possession of the country. All who are Scots will understand well enough this gallant but rash resolution. And if Scotland had been the cautious nation which she has always been supposed to be, or with the commercial training of later times had gone carefully into the whole question, foreseeing every

difficulty and understanding every detail, especially as to the capabilities of the country of which she was about to take possession, she would, no doubt, either have brought her undertaking to a successful end, or else abandoned it in time. But, unfortunately, she did neither of these things. Darien seems to have been taken entirely on the word of Paterson, who was not perfectly informed either as to its climate or the difficulties attending a settlement. The barbarous lengths to which the opposition of England would be carried could not have been foreseen by any man.

On the 26th July 1698, the expedition started. It consisted of five ships, carrying twelve hundred men of all ranks and conditions, a large number of the higher classes as well as the lower—in short, the framework of a complete community, according to the ideas of the time, labourers at the bottom and gentlemen at the top, some ‘of the best blood of Scotland,’ with a following, natural and kindly of their countrymen. They arrived in winter, and all went well for a time: but when the hot weather came, with all its attendant diseases and languors, dangers which they had not expected, and for which they were not prepared, the new undertaking assumed a very different aspect. The settlers died in crowds, the survivors, reduced and weakened by illness, were unable to continue the work, new expeditions arriving found the first almost extinguished, and everything to begin again: and, worst of all, food failed. This it would have been easy enough to get from America or the West Indies: but orders had been sent to the governors of all these colonies to refuse supplies to the Scots colonists. All foreign nations, except those openly at war with England, were free to enter

the ports of New York, of Barbadoes, and other West Indian harbours—even pirates and buccaneers, the scourge of the seas, were allowed to enter and refit—but the application of the Scots to buy food was steadily refused. This will seem almost incredible to the young reader, who knows of Scotland and England only as one country, closely bound to each other; but, though incredible, it is true, and I do not think there is any such blot on all history as the terrible story of Darien. The massacre of Glencoe will always be remembered against King William and his government, yet it was a crime planned and done by Scotsmen, a cruel chapter in the history of civil war. But the colony of Darien had harmed no man; their purpose was perfectly lawful; they had a charter under the name and signature of the king, who thus closed the lawful markets upon them, and forbade his other subjects to sell them bread in their extremity. It is an incident upon which it is difficult to dwell without feelings of rage and indignation, hard to control. Trade is a great power, and has been of the most incalculable advantage to our country; but it is more pitiless than a savage; it is like a wild beast when its interests are crossed, or supposed to be crossed.

The final result was that, ravaged by disease and famine, the remnants of the colony, which had, in the meantime, been swollen by two successive expeditions, one bringing thirteen hundred, the other three hundred men, to sicken and starve without help on that unfortunate shore, was at last attacked by the Spaniards, who had previously made no opposition to the settlement, and were not at all likely to have done so, had it not been deserted by its lawful protector and king.

After an interval of desperate and hopeless fighting, the settlers were overcome. One melancholy shipload, too weak, we are told, to heave up the anchor of their vessel, the *Rising Sun*, sailed heartbroken for home; but never reached Scotland, being lost in the dreadful blank of the high seas, so little traversed then in comparison with now. Years after, a doubtful account came that the *Rising Sun* had been cast ashore at Madagascar, and all its crew murdered. Half of Scotland or more was ruined by this dreadful catastrophe, and there is no chapter more dark in all our history. Even the persecution was less bitter and deplorable, since for this there was no reason whatever, except the brutal and cruel jealousy of—if I may use such a comparison—one trading firm against another, the savage determination of a tradesman to crush another who seemed likely to interfere with his profits; than which there is nothing more mean, ugly and horrible under the sun.

We have no reason for saying that King William regretted the miserable part he had been made to play; yet it is usual to believe that some compunction in his mind as to the wrongs done to a portion of his subjects induced him and his government to set forth a plan of union between the two kingdoms immediately after this terrible failure. It was not a happy moment, you may suppose, to suggest such an idea, yet there was a meaning in it of conciliation, of making any second Darien impossible, by giving the Scots equal rights and liberties in the matter of trade with the English. It is not wonderful that it should have been bitterly opposed by the Scots thus injured, insulted and wronged, eager for vengeance, and in a great measure indifferent

to the risk of a return to perpetual war and separation from a neighbour so unfriendly. When William died in 1701, after a reign of thirteen years, which had in the beginning brought much good to Scotland, but which had been darkened by these unhappy events towards the end, there occurred a moment during which it seemed quite possible that the Scots would break off a connection which had been so full of misery, and set the legitimate heir of the Stewarts, the son of James VII. of Scotland, on the throne of the ancient kingdom of the Stewarts, who also in their day had wrought her much woe, yet always remained more or less dear to her heart.

Queen Anne succeeded her brother-in-law peaceably in England in 1702, notwithstanding that there were a great many there who were legitimists, and clung to the Stewarts still, forming a party which now it was the fashion to call Jacobites, from James, the name not only of the old king but of his son. But you will see in the history of England, that even in that country it was uncertain up to the last moment, as again at Queen Anne's death, whether the young man, who, in France, was called the Prince of Wales, and whom the French king caused to be proclaimed King of England, Scotland and Ireland at his father's death, which had taken place a few months before the death of Anne, might not be called to the throne. And in Scotland it was more uncertain still, a great proportion of the country being in favour of this step, or, at least, in favour of a pause of consideration before binding the country to one proceeding or another. The young James, it was true, was a Catholic, brought up in all the traditions of divine

right, who would probably come back, if he ever was brought back, determined to carry out all his father's plans, and make an end of the Protestant heresy and the national freedom both together ; but, at the same time, he was the natural heir, the successor of all those gallant Jameses who had upheld the name and independence of Scotland, as it had never been done since their day ; and it was hoped that he might have learned a lesson from the misfortunes of his family. When, therefore, the English Parliament settled the succession of the crown after Queen Anne (who had lately lost the last of her children), upon Sophia, the Electress of Hanover, who was the daughter of Elizabeth, the Princess Palatine—who was the daughter in her turn of James VI. the nearest Protestant heir—Scotland demurred. You may suppose she was in no humour to follow the English parliament meekly. There was a universal determination in the country, even in the most moderate party, at least to secure equality of rights with England before consenting, and among many a great disinclination to consent at all, and a feeling that even to perish fighting would be better than to be trodden down by superior strength. There was but one part of Scotland that stood for the Revolution settlement, and that was the Church and Presbyterian party, which felt that settlement to be all that stood between them and persecution as of old ; but against it were not only the old Cavaliers, the Jacobites, a great number of the gentry, and all the unthinking reserve of the Highlands, moved by a few chiefs—but a strong 'country party,' as it was called, headed by the Duke of Hamilton and other great noblemen, which was

probably the strongest of all, and which, in concert with either of the others, could entirely have crushed the third. These three parties united, voted, instead of the English Act of Protestant Succession, an Act of Security, providing that, at Queen Anne's death, the crown of Scotland should be at the disposal of the Scots parliament, who were to be free to name a successor of the royal line, and the Protestant religion ; with the stipulation that no one should be capable of holding both crowns, unless the Scots were admitted to a full share of the benefits of trade and navigation possessed by the English people. This act was accompanied by an ominous statute ordaining that all men capable of military service should henceforward be periodically drilled and trained to bear arms, thus to be in readiness, whatever happened. To this act the Queen's High Commissioner refused his assent. Parliament replied by refusing all supplies, and the sitting broke up in the wildest excitement. This was the state of affairs at the beginning of the new period, which was to prove so important in every way to the two kingdoms, the reign of Queen Anne.

CHAPTER XXII

THE UNION

As there had never been in the history of Scotland events more dreadful, or so exasperating to the temper of the country, as the two events of Glencoe and Darien, so there never was in all her disasters a time of such trouble, indignation and injured feeling as the time which preceded and followed the Union. The country, except in view of the tremendous loss inflicted by the failure of the Darien scheme, was not in an unprosperous condition. The Church was quiet and moderately contented, except in its most extreme division—the party now called the Cameronians, once the Wild Whigs of the West, a party which it would have been impossible to content by any concessions, but which was now as free to worship and guide itself in its own way as any other. There had been peace and prosperity in the land, as was proved by the fact that there was so much money to lose as had been thrown away on Darien. The great educational system, which has been one of the chief distinctions of Scotland, the excellent institution of parish schools, had been fully established; and though there was no longer any glory of a court, there had been much

advance in practical comfort and well-being. All this, perhaps, gave fuller force to the insult and injury inflicted upon the nation in the midst of seeming peace and fellowship. Scotland was sore and wounded in her deepest feelings. The injury done by the Darien failure, was, indeed, a fact, and a very severe and terrible one; but the sentiment involved was more hurtful still. It was a breach of every charity, of every promise, of the very spirit of mutual peace; and the Scots were justified in believing that war itself, a state in which the nation had been born and bred, and which had brought much suffering to them, but no dishonour, was better than the condition of outward peace, in which they were open to every sting and slight which a hostile partner could inflict. Even injury is not so bitter as scorn, and every act of their English yoke-fellows towards them had been contemptuous as well as cruel. When the Act of Security was passed there was all but war between the two countries. The Scots had almost thrown off the bond, the English were already discussing measures for the conquest and subjection of Scotland; that it should be precisely at this moment that the Union should have been pressed upon both seems strange to the spectator. It was something like compelling two men to join hands who stand with pistols cocked opposite to each other. After a fray, peacemaking seems natural, but it is extraordinary to propose an embrace at the moment when the combatants are about to fall to.

At the same time a desperate remedy is often the only thing that will meet a desperate case, and it was evident that unless the two countries were thus welded

together they must separate altogether, a thing which could not be contemplated calmly by any reasonable man. It had been bad enough in the ages when fighting was the universal trade, that within the narrow limits of an island two countries should be perpetually against each other, ever ready to strike a blow and take advantage the one of the other's misfortunes. But now, when fighting was no longer the universal trade, and when men were beginning to find that peace was best, and that work was good, and commerce a better way of enriching a country than even conquest, it became quite intolerable, or, indeed, what we call impossible, a state of affairs which it was to the interest of the race to stop by any means.

This, no doubt, was why, when England and Scotland were at each other's throats, and the smallest matter might have begun again the endless struggle, the idea of the Union was taken up by all the politicians. Just at the time when the Commissioners were nominated to consider the terms of the Union, the Scots took a step which might well have given the signal for a very different settlement of the question. A Scotch ship had been seized in the Thames at the complaint of the East India Company some time before, and when an English Indiaman was driven by stress of weather into the Firth of Forth, it was but natural that there should be a strong desire to retaliate by seizing her. But other circumstances came in to make the Scots go further than this. It began to be suspected that the vessel was no peaceful trader, but a pirate—and bit by bit the story grew : that this was the very ship which, encountering the *Rising Sun* with the relics of the Darien expedition in her, had taken that

melancholy vessel and murdered all on board, soon became evident to everybody concerned. What was thought or wished to be satisfactory evidence was given by some servants and sailors on board, and in the whirlwind of rage that was let loose the captain and several of the crew were seized, tried and executed. It does not seem that the story was true ; but the account of the real catastrophe which was afterwards given was equally unsatisfactory, and the truth will never be known. It was a little relief, however, to the mind of Scotland to hang a few Englishmen on the chance that they might have been concerned in that great and painful tragedy. Had they been members of the House of Commons, instead of merchant seamen, it would have been more just.

These were not good auspices under which to begin the discussion of the terms of the Union, and the discussion was a bitter one. The terms of it were more like those dictated to a conquered nation than offered to an equal and independent power. Scotland had to give up her parliament, which wounded her pride ; she had to take upon her her share of the national debt, having had none of her own : the share of representation offered her in the House of Commons was less than her due. It was true that a sum of money was to be granted to her in compensation of her share of the national debt, and also in compensation for the losses occurring at Darien, which were brought about by English means ; but this, by some bewildering twist of arithmetic, was to be paid back again in the shape of taxes, so there was no real compensation at all. In every stipulation indeed the treaty was favourable to England and unfavourable to Scotland. The country

was wild against it ; the chief of the Scotch Commissioners who opposed the Union was escorted every night to his lodging with tumultuous cheers, while those on the other side were scarcely safe of their lives ; nay, the populace hooted the treasure which was conveyed to Edinburgh Castle on the conclusion of the treaty, as the price of the national independence. But the Commissioners were overborne by pressure on the English side, by divisions and dissensions on the Scotch—also, it is said, though probably with injustice by the grant to their own use of a considerable part of the pretended compensation : and, tired out, harassed and disgusted, gradually yielded on every point. The Union was thus accomplished by almost every evil method and scarcely any good one. It was hated on one side, and at best cavalierly received on the other. Nevertheless it cannot be doubted now that all the modern life of Scotland dates from that period, and that a prosperity, which at that time would have appeared incredible, has followed, though at a considerable distance, upon this unpopular act. Had Scotland remained in the position in which she was at the time of the Darien scheme, life and thriving would soon have been impossible, and recourse to arms would have been the only alternative. She took a long time to recover the many affronts and losses which the Union procured her as a nation—but at least she was able to enter upon the busy paths of commerce and industry in which she had already shown herself so capable, and in due time her patience and self-denial were rewarded.

There was not, however, any rapid revival ; the practical downfall of the Union left the country sore and depressed for many years. It made the outbreak

of 1715 possible, in which year the rash daring of many Jacobite gentlemen in Scotland, the ever available forces of the Highlands, and a certain amount of support from the English Jacobites led to a great insurrection in the name of James VIII. of Scotland, which, breaking out first and lasting longest in Scotland, yet led to the loss of many valuable lives in England also. In Scotland it came to a climax in the battle of Sheriffmuir, which was not decisive either one way or another: after which the conflict lingered on through nearly a year and a-half of desultory fighting, feeble generalship and universal discouragement, which was not diminished, but rather increased, by the presence, for a short time, of James himself, the Pretender, as he was called by his enemies, the King by his friends, and the Chevalier de St George by those who were neither, yet were inclined to be courteous to the unfortunate prince. He was a melancholy man, which was not extraordinary considering his antecedents and evil fortune, and bitterly disappointed by the aspect of the forces which he had joined under the delusion that it was a large and victorious army, and which he found to be a miserable remnant in full retreat before a victorious enemy.

Thirty years later the same obstinate class of Scottish gentlemen and Highland chiefs raised the standard of the Stewarts once more in behalf of Prince Charles Edward, the son of James, a young, high-spirited and popular prince, who all but overturned the established condition of things, who was for a short time supreme in Edinburgh, and awoke an absolute panic in England, and even in London, by his march across the border. But the insurrection of 1745 was not more fortunate

than the former one, and was followed by much heavier retaliation—the leaders, some of whom were pardoned in ‘the Fifteen,’ as it was called in Scotland, perishing in large numbers on the scaffold in ‘the Forty-five’; Prince Charles, instead of procuring a safe retreat for himself to the peril of his followers, like his father, only escaped through innumerable dangers when all hope was over; and endeared himself to many in Scotland, who would not have lifted a finger for his cause, by his romantic adventures, and the courage and light-heartedness with which he bore them. After the gloomy Jameses, his father and grandfather, this gay and gallant young man might almost seem to have served himself heir to his remoter ancestors in the days when Scotland was a poor, independent kingdom, with a reputation for valour and chivalry which extended over all the world. But it was too late to restore that ancient reputation, and his qualities, as was sadly proved in his after career, were greatly those of high spirits and youth. His only brother was a priest, and died a Cardinal at Rome. Thus the direct line of the Stewarts came to an end. The best picture that could be found of Scotland at this moment, and of the expedition of Prince Charles and its consequences, you will find in *Waverley*.

By this time the depression caused by the Union had fully worked itself out in Scotland. The reaction had already begun in the Fifteen, and prevented that movement from acquiring a national character as a few years before it might have done. Well-being had begun to be habitual among the people, and especially in the great towns, which a rising trade made greater day by day; and the result of the two

attempts to overturn the settled government was rather to strengthen the conviction in the mind of the people that its advantages were greater than its defects, than to move them to any general return of sentiment towards a former ruler. It was not certainly an ideal government. To speak the truth, it gave perfect satisfaction nowhere. The first kings of the House of Hanover were neither loved nor respected, and the Scots did not for a long time cease to feel the smart of the humiliations inflicted by the Union. But prosperity and peace brought common sense and cool judgment along with them, and there was too much of these admirable qualities in the nation to permit them to shut their eyes to the fact that the independence of a separate kingdom had become a thing impossible, and that the advantage of common rights and a common trade was of far more importance than any ostentation of independence. A small merchant painfully struggling to hold his own is never of half the importance which a member of a great firm attains, and the firm of England, Scotland, Ireland and Company has been for several centuries the greatest in the world. Much foolish talk there continued to be on both sides for a long time, specially at first on the English side; and even now a hot-headed Scot may dream foolish dreams, or a thick-headed Englishman repeat the old insults; but I think the one is as harmless as the other. The nations are one, though retaining in many cases different sentiments, different prejudices, and completely distinct systems of law. The Englishman may jibe at the constitution of a cabinet in which Scotch members have the preponderance, while the Scotsman resents, sometimes with

bitterness, the general name of England, which is so often used to describe the three kingdoms; but these are grievances which may be very lightly dismissed. We may confess for our own country that Scotland has always had rather more than less than her due in the opinion of the world. She has been listened to and reckoned upon in the opinion of Europe from the times of Robert Bruce at least, more than any other country of her dimensions, partly because of the conspicuous valour of her sons, partly because of the reputation, half fictitious, which her historians acquired for her as being one of the most ancient kingdoms in the world. And in modern times one man, the ever-beloved and renowned Walter Scott, poet and romancer, has made her one of the best known countries in Christendom, making the whole world familiar with her history, her manners and her scenery. And it is not in this age that Scotland will yield the palm to any competitor. Prosperous and wealthy and strong, never a step behind, and sometimes a step before, her united brothers, she holds now a yet higher place than she held in the days of chivalry, in the estimation of the world.

THE END



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